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**HISTORY OF THE  
METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.**

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**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**METHODIST PROTESTANT**  
**CHURCH:**

**GIVING**  
**A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CAUSES AND EVENTS**  
**THAT LED TO THE**  
**ORGANIZATION OF THAT CHURCH;**

**AND A MORE PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF**  
**TRANSACTIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA,**  
**Never before published.**

**WITH**  
**AN APPENDIX,**  
**CONTAINING**  
**A REVIEW OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL**  
**CHURCH, THE INTRODUCTION OF EPISCOPACY, AND THE**  
**EXCLUSION OF THE LAITY FROM THE COUNCILS**  
**OF THE CHURCH.**

**BY REV. JOHN PARIS,**  
**OF THE N. CAROLINA CONFERENCE.**

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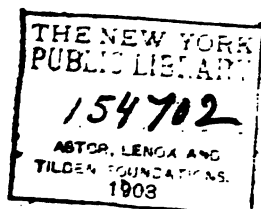
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**1849.**



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By JOHN PARIS,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the  
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE motives that induce an author to present his work to the public often become the subject of speculation. The writer, in setting forth this volume, begs leave to assure his readers that he is actuated by no ambitious or sinister motives, but his object is to vindicate and place truth in her proper position, and to do justice to the memory and characters of some who are no more numbered among the living. To this end the late Dr. John F. Bellamy had collected materials for such a work, but he was snatched away by the hand of death before it was begun. The materials thus collected fell into the hands of the late Rev. William Bellamy, who, although far advanced in life, had determined to get some friend to assist him in writing and publishing a history of reform in the "Old Roanoke District," and had commenced arranging the documents relating to the same, when death called him, also, away to the spirit land. At the suggestions and in compliance with the wishes of some of my Christian brethren, both of the ministry and laity, I consented to undertake to write out the contemplated work.



In the outset it was my intention to write a "History of the Methodist Protestant Church in North Carolina;" but at the suggestion of a ministerial brother of an adjoining conference, for whom I entertain the highest regard, I consented to alter the plan, after I had made considerable progress, and to give a "general view of the subject of reform throughout the United States, and a particular or definite account of its rise in Carolina." This change must account for the character of the former part of the work.

Circumstances have demanded such a work. Nearly all the "original reformers" in the ministry of this state have gone down to the grave; the motives by which they were actuated have long been impugned and misrepresented, and gratitude demands that justice should be done to their memory.

One of those, who was a faithful veteran in the days of "reform," but who is now no more, has left behind him a well written essay upon this subject. After expressing a desire that such a historical account should be written, he adds, "The writer of this cannot suppress the belief that a similar spirit to that which hung the bones of Cromwell in chains to gratify the resentment of monarchy against republicanism, is here in the old North State, and

ready to pounce upon the reputation of every consistent and faithful reformer, so soon as they and their efficient friends have gone the way of all the earth."

The sources from whence the writer has derived his materials for the work are the papers and documents collected by Dr. Bellamy, and manuscripts and pamphlets forwarded by brethren from different places. I have also gleaned many articles and historical documents from the columns of the "Mutual Rights," and "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer." The object of the writer has been to state facts as they transpired, therefore he has drawn largely upon documents written and published by the actors themselves.

In the Appendix, which contains a review of the policy adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church, in her organization, the introduction of episcopacy and the exclusion of the laity from her councils, in her rule-making department, it has been our object to show that the reformers had just cause to petition for a change in that government, and ask for an acknowledgment of their ecclesiastical rights.

Throughout the entire work the object of the author has been to exhibit truth with its natural claims. If in this he has failed, and error has stolen into his pages, it is his misfortune and not his fault.

He pleads not infallibility, but rectitude of intention. The volume has been written, with the exception of a few pages, amidst the anxieties, cares, duties and toils of an itinerant life. And in this place the writer most respectfully returns his thanks to those highly esteemed Christian brethren who have so kindly afforded him facilities for the prosecution of his work: and with a willingness that the book shall stand or fall according to its merits, it is hereby submitted to the patrons of religious liberty by

THE AUTHOR.

NORTH CAROLINA, MAY, 1849.

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# HISTORY OF THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

**Dissatisfaction among the Local Ministry in North Carolina on account of the encroachments of the General Conference.—Address to the Bishops and Virginia Annual Conference.—Circular to the District Conference.—Memorial to the General Conference of 1824.**

THE chronicles of the past, whether sacred or profane, are interesting to the inquiring mind. By resorting to the archives of history we are enabled to separate truth from error, and offer contradiction to falsehood when she appears under the garb of tradition. History tells us of the sufferings and toils through which our forefathers passed in contending for that liberty which we as a nation enjoy. And it is also to history that we must look for a true and faithful narrative of the causes and events that led to the securement of our religious liberties. They should ever be watched with a jealous eye, and guarded with the most careful solicitude, for

whatever belongs to our spiritual interests, or pertains to our religious rights, is most unquestionably of vital importance.

The history of Methodism for the last century testifies to the fact that the great Methodist family are now divided into several distinct ecclesiastical denominations. And although such denominational divisions have taken place, both in England and America, yet so far as the doctrines and means of grace taught by Mr. Wesley are concerned, they are all of the same faith, and subscribe to the same doctrine of salvation. The inquiry then might arise, what are the causes that have led to these several divisions among the believers in the doctrines taught by Wesley? The answer is, men have had their ecclesiastical rights withheld from them; and in order to enjoy them they were sought in new organizations. The student in ecclesiastical history will learn that in every instance which has resulted in division, these rights have been withheld by the ministry, exercising authoritative power, and who, evincing a disposition to lord it over God's heritage, have thereby produced schism in the body.

That every citizen of our country has an inalienable right to be heard in the law or rule-making department, either in person or by proxy, delegated by his suffrage, is a doctrine that surely no American will deny. Again, that which is politically right cannot be religiously wrong; and if we are entitled to such right in the State, according to the

principle laid down, we are entitled to the same in the church.

The Bible is admitted among all Protestant denominations of Christians to be the only rule of faith and practice, and consequently it becomes the standard of religious morals. Hence we receive it as an axiom of sound doctrine that no man should be divested of ecclesiastical privileges or excluded from the communion of the church of Christ, except it be for conduct incompatible with the precepts and doctrines of the word of God.

The Methodist Protestant Church was originally composed of seceders from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The causes of the secession existed in the polity of the M. E. Church; and as those causes have not been generally understood, and as the motives and characters of the seceders or "Reformers" have been impugned, it is the design of the writer to give a faithful narrative of all that relates to the same, so far as the records and documents extant, which relate to those things, afford information. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church which met in 1820 adopted a rule granting to the local preachers a charter, by virtue of which the local preachers in each presiding elder's district were permitted to meet together annually in District Conference. According to the charter, the presiding elder by virtue of his office was to preside as chairman. The prerogatives of this conference extended to the granting of license to preach, recommending preachers to the Annual Conference

for the itinerancy and for orders, &c. Although this charter had the semblance of a boon, still the local preachers as well as the laity were without any voice whatever either in the Annual or General Conferences. The General Conference that granted the local preachers' conference charter also proceeded to enact some *special rules* for the *government* of the local ministry, without any delegated authority whatever from them. The assembling of themselves together in the District Conferences afforded them an ample opportunity of interchanging with each other their views with regard to their rights as ministers of the church of Christ. Ever since the establishment of the governing policy of the M. E. Church there were some few to be found within her pales who questioned the high claims of the itinerant ministry to exclusive legislation and authoritative control. Soon after the rise of the General Conference of 1820, the subject began to be discussed by many who advocated the right of the local ministry and laity to representation in the rule-making department of the church. It was among the local ministry (particularly of the south) that the principles of the polity of the M. E. Church were at this time severely questioned; for feeling themselves, by virtue of their calling and ordination to the ministry, entitled to the same rights and privileges with their brethren in the itinerancy, and finding themselves without a voice or representation in the rule-making department of the church, and at the same time the itinerant ministry being vested

with the making as well as the execution of those laws, they very naturally concluded that a disparity existed, unwarranted by the word of God or the nature and obligations of the ministerial office. At the first meeting of Roanoke District Conference of local preachers (after the granting of the charter) the subject began to be earnestly discussed. The General Conference of 1820, as has been remarked, passed some special rules for the government of the local ministry, unrepresented as they were in that body. These rules had no application whatever to the laity. To the local ministry it seemed to be a stretch of power unwarranted in the nature of right; and as the "march of power is ever onward, and its tendency is to accumulation," many of them became alarmed with regard to the safety of their ecclesiastical rights, and, like our forefathers, upon the invasion of their rights by the imposition of the celebrated tea tax and stamp act by the parliamentary authority of Britain, they strongly protested against such a stretch of power on the part of the General Conference; not on account of the restriction imposed by the rule above mentioned, as many of the advocates of itinerant supremacy have very unjustly and unfairly contended in the South, *but on account of the principle involved, LEGISLATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION*. They took the ground that the General Conference had no just right to enact a special rule for their government alone without their being represented in that body by delegated authority. They laid down the true

*American principle*, and set up their claims of right to the same. In the year 1821\* the District Conference of local preachers for Roanoke District in North Carolina, in order to bring the attention of their brethren and the church at large to the subject of the encroachments of the General Conference, sent up an address to the Virginia Annual Conference.

The caption of the address runs in the following words: "Address to the Bishops and Virginia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church." After expressing astonishment at the stretch of power exercised by the General Conference, and a regret that the harmony of the itinerant and local ministry should be threatened or disturbed thereby, the address proceeds, "Much sensibility

\* During the year 1821 the spirit of inquiry among the Methodist people concerning their ecclesiastical rights seems to have been awakened throughout the United States, both among the ministry and the laity. This was nothing new. The same inquiry pervaded the Methodist community in 1794. Rev. Jesse Lee says, "The same spirit prevailed in many places, both among our local preachers and private members. Some of them contended that the local preachers ought to have a seat and a vote in all our conferences; and others said there ought to be a delegation of lay members." (Lee's History of the Methodists, page 213.) About this time the "Western Repository" was gotten up, being edited by William S. Stockton. In this periodical the ecclesiastical rights of the local ministry and laity were discussed with marked ability, great clearness and force, by writers from various parts of the Union. Although the local ministry in Carolina were among the first in asserting and vindicating their rights, yet the laity seem to have lain dormant upon the question until the formation of the Baltimore Union Society, as will be noticed in its proper place.

is created, and inquiry is set on foot whether the General Conference possesses any constitutional right, consistent with the articles of the church and the economy of Methodism, to pass such a rule or make such a law. It is considered by *some that they have not*, because the 24th Article of the Church disallows the idea that the goods, riches, &c., of Christians are common, as touching the right, title and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. They think, as that article grants to Christian men the exclusive right, title and possession of their own property, the fair consequence is that the General Conference have no right to impose a *restriction* upon them in the manufacture or transfer thereof, beyond what the law of the nation, honesty and religion do manifestly require.

“We do hereby most earnestly ask the opinion of the Bishops and Conference upon the subject. And if they should be of opinion that the General Conference have the right to pass the aforesaid law, then we would most respectfully ask the Bishops, Conference and traveling preachers at large, whether there be any constitutional *limits* prescribed in the system of Methodism beyond which the General Conference cannot go in laying restrictions upon the local preachers, as a condition of holding their office? And if they think that the system *does* prescribe limits to the legislative authority of the General Conference, respecting the local preachers, we would



feel a peculiar satisfaction in seeing ~~the~~ *limits* of their power fully and plainly stated by proper authority.\*

“But if the traveling preachers are of opinion that the General Conference is under *no* restriction in that respect, but are at full liberty to require any sacrifices of the local preachers, which they may from time to time think proper to exact; or that the General Conference, in conjunction with the traveling preachers at large, are under no constitutional restraint beyond which they cannot go respecting the local preachers; in that case this conference would respectfully ask whether, considering the refinement and liberality of the country and age in which we live, the vast and growing numbers, the talent, influence, zeal and utility of the local preachers, a *reform* in the system of church government is not necessary, so far, at least, as respects the local preachers, by granting them a *charter* sufficiently clear to secure thereafter their official dignity and domestic tranquillity from any further encroachments; or else admit them to an equal share in the councils of the church, at least so far as *self-government* is concerned? For why should the local preachers *alone* be considered incapable of self-

\*We have inserted this address of the “Roanoke District Conference” of local preachers because the motives of the local preachers have been misrepresented on account of this very address. Their object was not to ask a repeal of this rule under the circumstances, but to oppose the grounds taken by the General Conference, to enact *special rules* for their government without their consent.

government? Does a man become a political idiot by becoming a local preacher among the Methodists?

“But it has been said, if we admit delegates from the *local order* into the General Conference, we shall form too large a body to do business. To this we reply, fix the ratio upon a large scale, and the number of representatives will be found full small to do business—for example, the Congress of the United States. It has been said that local preachers have local ideas and local prejudices; and if they were admitted into the clerical council, they would corrupt the church and overturn the itinerant plan! To which we answer by the same mode of reasoning, the itinerant preachers have *itinerant ideas* and *itinerant prejudices*. And how can they legislate for local churches without a minute knowledge of their situation and their peculiar difficulties? Be that as it may, we have no desire to take upon us the care of all the churches, and the awful responsibility of governing the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. We do, however, wish to understand and exercise our *rights* as Christians and Methodist preachers, and be able to defend, upon the grounds of *Scripture*, *reason* and *common sense*, whatever is found in the system of Methodism: that the two armies of the Shulamite may be able to hold the position assigned them, and with harmonious energy and unwearied diligence press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.

"We have the honor and happiness to be, with high consideration and great esteem, your fellow laborers in the bonds of the gospel.

"On behalf of the conference,

"WM. BELLAMY, *President pro tem.*

"JOS. B. HINTON, *Secretary.*

"December 7th, 1821."

The language of this address is the language of men who felt that their rights were not safe. The rule of which they complained applied to them alone, as a distinct order of men in the church; they doubted the right of the General Conference to enact or adopt such a rule with respect to them; and fearing that the same authority might encroach still further upon their right, such was the first step they took to make manifest their views with regard to those rights. It will be perceived that they complain of the stretch of power exercised by the General Conference in adopting what they call "the Spirit-making rule," yet they ask for no repeal of that rule, but modestly inquire after their rights, and of the propriety of being represented by authority delegated by their suffrages in that council which had ventured to adopt a rule for their spiritual government. The address reached the Virginia Annual Conference, and upon being read, one of the members moved that it be thrown *under* the table, but Bishop McKendree, who occupied the chair, interposed, saying, "Feelings, brethren, men's feelings must be respected." The address was laid upon the table, and when it was

taken up and considered an answer was ordered to be sent to the petitioners, but through some management or unaccountable delay, the answer was not received by the Roanoke District Conference until two conference years had passed away.

At the session of the Roanoke District Conference, held at Whitaker's chapel in 1822, a resolution was passed authorizing the secretary to forward a copy of the address "to the Bishops and Virginia Annual Conference" to the several District Conferences of local preachers throughout the United States, together with a circular letter accompanying the same. The design in forwarding these documents or addresses to the District Conferences was to bring the attention of their brethren abroad to a candid consideration of their common rights as ministers in the church of their choice. The circular is addressed

*To the several District Conferences of the Local Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church:*

In the economy of Methodism this conference readily perceive much to praise, much to admire on the one hand, and on the other much to censure, much to deplore. The prominent features of our system, our doctrines, our episcopacy, our itinerant plan, our general rules and usages, are so scriptural, so apostolic, and contain so much of primitive simplicity and piety, that they successfully challenge the whole world for a comparison, and afford us no little exultation that we are members

of a church so evangelical, so apostolical. These, under the divine blessing, have suddenly caused her to look "forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners;" and have marked her victorious course in the Redeemer's cause with a lucid glory, unequaled since the illustrious founders of Christianity entered upon their eternal reward. In these ever to be held sacred features it would be more than sacrilege to wish an innovation. But then on the other hand the enormous prerogatives with which the itinerancy invested themselves are at variance with "the refinement and liberality of the country and age in which we live," and contrary to the plainest maxims of common justice. Those who serve the church in the holy office of the ministry certainly deserve to be honored; and no ministers upon the face of the earth can possibly have stronger claims to the highest consideration than our brethren of the itinerancy, yet we cannot discover either reason or propriety in their uniting in themselves *solely* the entire executive, legislative and judicial powers of the church, and that, too, without assigning any limits or checks or accountability for the due exercise thereof.

Thus in truth and fact the local ministry of our church—although so numerous, and enriched with so much talent, experience, zeal, influence, usefulness and devotedness to the church of their best affections, and containing such numbers, who nursed and guarded her in infancy and child-

hood with the tenderest solicitude and faithfulness, and aided in giving her a name and a place among the churches, by the intensity of their labors and exposure—have been driven into local life to seek that repose which worn out lungs, premature decays and complicated afflictions demanded. These tottering remnants and frosted locks of other days, in common with their other local brethren, are not allowed by the traveling connection to be more than mere ciphers in point of authority, nor to maintain any better than a kind of proscribed standing. This unprecedented intolerance, the more remarkable because invidious, exists in no other church; nor in any one except ours does less than *one-third* of the ministry assume the entire control, to the utter exclusion of the larger co-ordinate branch from even a voice in the making of the very laws by which themselves are to be governed. Many noble, generous spirits in the itinerancy regret, as well as ourselves, the retention of this most absurd principle in our Discipline, and would hail that day as a new and happy era in Methodism in which it shall be expunged.

As local men we are indeed allowed to preach, under certain circumstances; but however successful our labors or urgent the necessity may be, we have no authority to form a society or to receive a member. We are permitted to receive ordination, after a lengthy probation, provided we can make it appear that our official services are needed; and very latterly we have been rescued from long neg-

lected obscurity by the grant of the *Local Conference Charter*; but then, as if unable to govern ourselves, the presidency thereof is committed to an itinerant minister, who may, whenever he pleases, attempt to prevent the freedom of investigation and stifle complaint. Such doings have already been seen.

Does the just discontent of the locality arrest the attention of the General Conference? As if to drive us into silent submission, the "Spirit" making rule is hung over us in terrorem! Do the South and West and North importune the General Conference for the acknowledgment of our rights? To pacify or amuse us, an *ignis fatuus* toy, the District Conference, is given us. Do the deliberations of the District Conference turn on our injuries and the remedy? Certain members of the powers that be threaten to strip us of even this little brief authority! Do we as a recognizing conference respectfully spread the grievances of the local order before the bishops and members of an Annual Conference, and ask information, advice and relief? We are not even favored with a reply! Here we pause—here close the painful detail—all our wrongs we "must not, will not tell."

And what is the fault of the local preachers to merit all this contumely? Are we aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise? or are we indeed incapable of self-government? or must we go in quest of another Moses to lead us from our neglected and pro-

scribed condition into that state of *privilege* and *usefulness* to which our numbers and common justice entitle us? Providence did, indeed, open the auspicious door to our itinerant brethren for the restoration of entire confidence, harmony and cordial co-operation between themselves and us when the District Conference measure was under discussion. If these conferences had only been made a little more efficient, and one "delegate" from each had been allowed to take a seat in the "General Council," with a like number of representatives from the Annual Conferences, it would have formed a representation so equal and so reasonable that it would for ever have silenced the voice of murmur; a concession, magnanimous, would have cemented indissolubly the bonds of concord and ministerial attachment between us. This, however, has been left undone. Justice and self-respect *now* equally urge us to claim it as a right.

Notwithstanding the native inanity of the District Conferences; brethren, we may make them immensely important. They are pregnant with events of the most momentous kind, and bid fair to be harbingers of good things to come. They are admirably calculated to bring the local preachers together, to form intimate acquaintances; and, moreover, those heretofore held within the Roanoke District have been largely blessed, both to preachers and people. Therefore, this conference do entreat you, dear brethren, with respectful earnestness, if possible attend them in your respective districts;



assured as we are a rich harvest of solid satisfaction will be your certain reward. The Local Conference of the Roanoke District, in transmitting to your respective conferences copies of our Minutes and of our Address to the Bishops and members of the Virginia Conference, together with this circular letter, seek a reciprocation of the favor. We shall be extremely gratified and obliged by receiving in exchange copies of the Minutes of your respective conferences, together with any communication you may think proper to make. And we particularly ask a friendly correspondence, disclosing such views as you may have, or may form, concerning the claims and the course which the great body of local preachers in America ought to pursue to obtain their formal acknowledgment. In the interim would it not be very advisable that each District Conference, at its next meeting, prepare a respectful memorial, to be forwarded to the next General Conference, claiming our most obvious rights, either a "charter sufficiently clear to secure thereafter our official dignity and domestic tranquillity from any further encroachments, or else to share equally in the councils of the Church?"

[Signed]

JOS. B. HINTON,

*Secretary of the Conference.*

Washington, N. C., January 1st, 1823.

The above circular address sets forth the views of the local ministry with regard to the church of their choice with clearness, and likewise states their grievances with that candor which the nature

of the circumstances demanded. Viewing themselves as virtually proscribed, so far as authority in the church, or weight, or influence in the rule-making department was concerned, they made this appeal to their brethren abroad who were similarly situated, that they might make one common cause together; and by such union increase their strength to vindicate their rights, and plead for a redress of their grievances.

There is one item in the "economy of Methodism" in which they say they "perceive much to admire," that draws the particular attention of the reader, and that item is "Episcopacy." At this period of the agitation of the subject of reform in the M. E. Church but little complaint had been made on account of the episcopal office, which had been imposed upon the church at its organization under the sanction of Mr. Wesley's name. In 1790 the Rev. James O'Kelly and his colleagues had opposed the stretch of authority exercised by Mr. Asbury, but in vain; for he tells us, "Francis was born and nurtured in the land of kings and bishops, and that which is bred in the bone is hard to be got out of the flesh."

But in the year 1826, when that masterly treatise appeared, the "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, by the Rev. Alexander M'Caine," which showed most clearly that the episcopal office had been foisted upon the church in America contrary to the desire or intention of Mr. Wesley, the friends of reform no longer viewed it as an ad-

mirable feature in Methodist economy, but regarded it as spurious and altogether questionable as regarded its legality.

To the foregoing address several District Conferences responded in the most friendly manner, and cheered onward the friends of reform; but from some others the responses were cold and indifferent; and from the Huntsville Conference, which employed their presiding elder to pen their answer, who was said to be a "Scotchman of the old Tory school," they received downright insult. About this time it was intimated by some in high authority that the "Local Conference Charter" would be withdrawn, and the local ministry became seriously alarmed concerning the manner in which their rights were viewed by the powers that be. The itinerancy had discovered that the local ministry in their District Conferences, by conferring together, were disposed to inquire after their rights, and also to form a definite opinion with regard to the same, which was becoming fully manifested by the tenor of their circulars and memorials.

At the meeting of the Roanoke District Conference at Washington, in December, 1823, it was unanimously resolved to address the following memorial to the General Conference that was to sit in the city of Baltimore in May, 1824, and also to forward a copy of the same to all the sister District Conferences :

*To the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to be next holden in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1824 :*

DEAR BRETHREN,—With unusual solicitude we importune your patient, friendly and impartial deliberations and resolves—deliberations and resolves which, in our humble opinion, vitally concern the harmony and peace of thousands. We charitably hope that in an order so sacred as yours, and in a body clothed with functions so HEAVENLY, no individual will be found disposed to stifle our complaints, to disregard our lamentations, or to scoff at our equitable claims ; but we rather trust that you only wait to know our grievances, that in the plenitude of your love and justice you may find opportunity to relieve them all. Brethren, you have already done great things for us, whereof we are glad. The Local Conference Charter, which, by your giving and our receiving, has now become an unalienable right, upon the ground of mutual agreement, we hold with gratitude, and will guard inviolably. We feel a sort of new creation by its influence, a sort of resurrection from official death. If love the most animating, union the most enduring, deliberations the most important, investigations the most searching, and resolves the most laudable and useful, be fanciful figments in the Christian character, then we shall admit, and not until then, with our Huntsville brethren, that Local Conferences are mere “*ignis fatuus* toys,” unworthy of our reception and of your wisdom, and in such case, with them we may

ungratefully tell you to take back the childish toy. But, brethren, we are persuaded that by this grant, just as it is composed, of a local body and an itinerant head or president, you have laid a broad base for an extended and permanent union of the local and itinerant orders of our church; and have so concentrated the energies of the local order as to make them of vastly additional importance to our connection and to the world. Burning as the ordeal is through which our characters pass annually, neither this nor any other motive shall cause us, with our Huntsville brethren, to pant again for the sloth, the neglect, the flesh pots of Egypt; but you, as our Moses, by giving us the charter, have led us through the Red sea. Carry us, lead us, or go with us a little further, and we will mutually share the delights of the promised land, and set peaceably and harmoniously together under the olive of heaven. We have some old Calebs among us who were with some of you, the veterans of former days, amid the wilderness of America. That those aged heralds, at least, of the living God, ask a place at your side, not under your feet, nor over your heads, should not surprise you; and should the hand of God shortly lead them up to heaven, you certainly will feel no hesitancy in admitting the Joshuas they may leave behind to a place in your armies, upon the ground of equal rights. Our wishes, our claims are but few, and, in our opinion, founded in principles of policy so reasonable and equitable that you cannot find it in

your hearts to disallow them. ( First of all, we beg, or rather claim, as a matter of *right*, the removal from our Discipline of the rule or law prohibiting local preachers from distilling and retailing spirit-~~uous~~ liquors, under certain penalties, not because the rule affects our *interest*, but, first, because we never subscribed to such a rule; secondly, we have not made it valid by any subsequent admission or agreement; and thirdly, it involves a *principle* which, as men, Americans and Christians, we can not, we will not admit, namely, that any power, whether in the hands of one man or many, has any implied, expressed or equitable right to make laws for our government without our consent or representation. If the principle involved in the creation of that law be admitted, laws may be multiplied to any extent for our government, and the same authority that creates may abolish, until our Discipline may be so mutilated or metamorphosed as to be any thing besides what it was when we subscribed to it. )

To guard against future encroachments of a similar nature, and to place our church upon a more elevated and liberal ground, we humbly crave and firmly claim for our order the right of local representation in the General Conference of our church. The principle upon which this claim is founded you acted upon in the Local Conference grant. The great object of our church government should be to maintain the most intimate union and harmony between the two great orders peculiar to

+ Cause of the Anti-Slavery  
immersion of the church members

our church, itinerant and local. This object you wisely sought to secure, by uniting an itinerant head with a local body, in the Local Conference grant. Here the two orders, with their peculiar views, harmoniously blend in one; and whatever may be the doubts of distrust or inexperience, we already perceive that where wisdom and goodness prevail, as we hope they ever will in these conferences, vast benefits will accrue from this union; and we respectfully ask whether you do not accord with us in opinion that if this miniature effort to harmonize and unite the two orders has been productive of results so beneficial, whether an admission of the local order, upon a fair ratio of representation, into the General Conference must not eventually produce a oneness of soul and of object, and vastly illuminate and strengthen the deliberations of that conference? Not that we pretend that wisdom belongs to us, but we think you will admit with us that a concentration of ideas and feelings of men, scattered over a country so extensive as ours, and so variously experienced in the adventures of life and of nature, would vastly improve the deliberations of any deliberative body. But, brethren, when we modestly and affectionately tell you that we ask, not as a privilege, but claim as a *right*, which we never expect to relinquish, namely, a voice in making the laws by which we are to be governed, we entreat you not hastily to reproach us with an inordinate thirst for power. If we ask for power, it is only to live in


the elements of civil and religious freedom; it is only to walk with you upon the same level along the road to heaven. In justification of your own wisdom, liberality and goodness—for the honor and interests of Methodism—for the success of the Redeemer's kingdom in these United States, never let it be said by an American that you were even willing to legislate, without their consent, for some thousands of your ministerial brethren, many of whom have long since taken all the grades of promotion which our church allows, except that of the bishopric, and have served with honor the highest throughout the war. The events of twenty, thirty or forty years will tell their honorable history, when their spirits have fled to heaven and their remains are motionless in the dust, which will soon be the case with many of them. But for the stern demands of principle, and their ardent devotion to the Saviour's kingdom, they would no more trouble you with a word or a sigh, but patiently wait the hour when you would feel entirely willing to join them in hallelujah, hallelujah to God and to the Lamb, whatever your scruples may now be about *deliberating with them here*. Brethren, we cheerfully admit that hitherto in this great matter you have been governed by policy which you thought best, and not by lordly views over God's heritage. But time and experience will generally ameliorate and improve the best inventions of men, and we respectfully beseech you, in the disposal of this appeal to your justice and magnanimity, in support of a radical im-



provement in ours, to exercise that moderation, love and prayer which accompanied its creation.

Brethren, suffer not yourselves to suspect the purity of our motives; number us not with wild adventurers on hazardous experiments. You cannot help perceiving that if we err, it is an excessive devotion to the vital principles of primitive Methodism. Much as we confide in your love and wisdom, any departure from her *ancient laws* we scrutinize, and only ask the privilege to join you in making her stakes strong, and in rearing high her invulnerable bulwarks; and upon the most sacred dictates of principle and love we beseech you not hastily to conclude that you have no need of us.

Had we been governed by views of ambition, long since we should have endeavored not only to rival you in the estimation of our lay brethren, but to obstruct your progress in your itinerant career. But where is the hand among us that has not administered cheerfully to the necessities of our itinerant brethren? Have our hearts been less open to receive them than our doors? And what tongue among us has failed to advocate their cause? Brethren, you certainly will consider us of some use in the household of God. Say not then, we again beseech you, by refusing our claims, that you have *no need of us*. We wish with you to live and die. But we again repeat, modestly, affectionately, and firmly, that we never expect to revoke our claims. Brethren, abolish the rule alluded to, and give us an *equal voice* in making the laws by which



we are to be governed, and in so doing you will honor yourselves in the estimation of discerning men; place on elevated principles the policy of our church; promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, and unite in *one* two great bodies which now feel an alarming and widening severance. The oldest man among you never did, nor the youngest never will be required to give a voice or a vote on a more important and perhaps ominous question to our church than that comprised in this address. And may He who does all things well rule over and govern your resolves in this matter.

HENRY HOLMES, *President.*

JOSEPH B. HINTON, *Secretary.*

How calm, how courteous, and how dignified is the foregoing address! How christianlike is the spirit that it breathes! Penned and adapted by Americans who inhaled the pure air of republicanism, it sets forth their views of their rights in a clear and lucid manner. The mind is at once struck with the similarity of the doctrines therein laid down and of those of our American ancestors that protested against the celebrated "tea tax and stamp act," which produced the American revolution, and eventuated in the establishment of the liberties of our country. Notwithstanding the charitable spirit of this memorial, and the highly respectable and pious body from which it emanated, there have been found men who have shown themselves willing to impugn the motives that gave it birth, and to ascribe to the friends of reform

designs and intentions unworthy of the Christian name. It has been urged by the enemies of reform that "the Spirit-making rule," which had been made for the government of the local ministers alone, stood opposed to their temporal interests; and hence their opposition to the same. But let the truth-loving reader bear in mind the reasons assigned by those memorialists why they prayed for a "removal" of that rule—"not because the rule affected our *interest*, but, first, because we never subscribed to such a rule; secondly, we have not made it valid by any subsequent admission or agreement; and, thirdly, it involves a *principle* which, as men, Americans and Christians, we cannot, we will not admit, namely, that any power, whether in the hands of one man or many, has any implied, expressed, or equitable right to make laws for our government without our consent or representation." Here, then, is the clear American principle laid down. And the writer would ask, what American heart can find fault with it?

The memorial was the prayer of the local ministers alone; they spread their petition before the General Conference with respect to their own rights. Hitherto the question of the rights of the laity had been but little agitated in Carolina. But in other parts of the Union they were equally active in setting forth their claims as Christians, and demanding their rights to representation in the department of the church in which rules were enacted for their government. The local ministry of the

church, in many parts of the United States, were equally alive to their rights; and circular letters were written and distributed by the friends of reform, for the purpose of promoting and encouraging a union of effort among them in petitioning the ensuing General Conference to grant them the exercise of their rights, "a voice in making the laws" by which they were to be governed.

Among the writers that came forward at this stage of the controversy, the Rev. Nicholas Snethen and Rev. A. Shinn were prominent. The productions of these distinguished divines shed much light upon the question at issue, and led many to an honest and candid examination of the subject, who had heretofore supposed they possessed no ecclesiastical rights. The opponents of reform were not idle. Management and care were exercised in the Annual Conferences in order to secure the election of such men as delegates to the General Conference of 1824 as were known to be opposed to the spirit and design of reform. Nor were their labors unsuccessful. Upon the meeting of the General Conference it was evident that the anti-reformers were in the majority. On the fourth day of the session a motion was made to appoint a committee to whom should be referred petitions and memorials from the laity. The yeas and nays being called for, there were in the negative sixty, affirmative fifty-three, the vote fairly showing the spirit of the conference. But this damped not the courage of the friends of reform. Their course, like their

principles, was onward. For, says a distinguished reformer, "although there was a small majority of the late General Conference decidedly opposed to an equitable church representation, yet there were many who boldly advocated the measure with arguments so cogent and language so eloquent that in any other place and before any other judges they must have prevailed."

## CHAPTER II.

Meeting of Reformers in Baltimore.—Baltimore Union Society formed.—Formation of the Roanoke Union Society;—Its Constitution and Circular.—Trial and defence of Rev. W. W. Hill.

UPON the opening of the session of the General Conference in the city of Baltimore, on the 1st of May, 1824, petitions and memorials from different places, as well as the memorial from the Roanoke District Conference, all praying for a change in the order of the church government, were received, read, referred and reported upon. After a delay of some days, the committee on these memorials and petitions reported; and it was finally decided by vote that an answer, in the form of a General Conference circular, signed by the bishops, should be given to the petitioners.

In this celebrated circular address of the General Conference there is much art and ingenuity resorted to for the purpose of evading the points directly at issue. The sophistry used is altogether unworthy the dignity of so respectable an ecclesiastical body.

In order to stave off the main questions, and give them the "go by," they say, "But if by 'rights and privileges' it is intended to signify something foreign from the institutions of the church, as we received them from our fathers, pardon us if we know no such rights, if we do not comprehend such privileges."

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The rights and privileges claimed by the petitioners were well understood by the members of that body, for they had been clearly set forth, and could appear to none in an ambiguous light. The whole mystery of the case may be resolved into these few words, the General Conference was not disposed to admit those "rights and privileges," and therefore denied them. It is not the intention or design of the writer to enter into a review of the positions assumed in the circular, but he will offer a paragraph from a review of the same by the Rev. James Smith :

"Therefore, if the authors of the circular 'know no such rights,' it appears to be time they had looked more closely into this question. '*The institutions of the church as we received them from our fathers,*' is a trite and very convenient topic. It has been the plea of error in other churches also. But those who derive their principles from reason and revelation are not usually in so great need of it. Beside, in the case at issue even that plea, when urged as a ground of right, is doubtless very flimsy; for the ecclesiastical polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church has been, in general, a creature of change from the beginning. See the account which Mr. Wesley gives of the origin of his power. See, also, every history of Methodism ever published in the world."

Again says the same writer, "How imposing is the 'circular,' but how illusory the boasted ground of constitutional obligation upon the laity, when fairly considered! when fairly exposed!"

Thus far the efforts of the friends of reform in the government of the M. E. Church had been foiled; but as it was their spiritual home, the church of their choice, they were not disposed to recede from the position they had taken; but trusting in the justice and rectitude of their cause, they resolved to redouble their efforts. To the action of that General Conference they had looked with deep solicitude, and when they saw their claims and petitions so ungracefully set aside in the circular of the same, they boldly resolved to move forward, and their practical motto seemed to be, "we never expect to revoke our claims."

After the rise of the General Conference, a meeting was held in the city of Baltimore on the 21st of May, 1824, by a number of the itinerant and local ministers and laymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church, convened for the purpose of adopting such measures as in their judgment should be best calculated to effect an improvement in the government of the church. Dr. S. K. Jennings was called to the chair, and Francis Waters, D. D., was appointed Secretary—when the following resolutions were adopted:

*Resolved, first,* To institute a periodical publication, entitled the Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to be conducted by a committee of ministers and laymen.

*Secondly,* To raise societies in all parts of the United States, whose duty it shall be to disseminate



the principles of a well balanced church government, and to correspond with each other.

*Thirdly*, To appoint a committee of their own body to draft a circular addressed to the ministers and members of the M. E. Church, and to forward the same forthwith to all parts of the United States.

The following persons were accordingly appointed on said committee:—Dr. S. K. Jennings, Baltimore; Dr. John French, Norfolk; W. Smith, New York; Gideon Davis, Georgetown, D. C.; John W. Boardly and P. B. Hopper, Esq., Eastern Shore, Maryland. The committee appointed for the purpose issued the following

*Circular addressed to the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

An expectation was entertained by the friends of reform attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, that the General Conference of 1824 would have made some important and salutary improvement in the government; that the congregated wisdom and experience of that body would have renounced all pretensions to govern the church without her consent, and that by a well-timed measure they would have paved the way for an equitable church representation. But we are sorry to say that our hopes have not been realized, and that very little has been done favorable to these views.

In consequence of this disappointment, and with an intention to prevent any evils which it may

have a tendency to produce, it is thought advisable to address a circular to all the friends of reform in the connection, exhorting them not to suffer these unpleasant circumstances to alienate their affections from the church, nor to induce them to leave her communion, but rather to consider them as admonitions calling the more loudly upon all her friends to cleave to her to the last extremity, and to unite as one man in a mutual effort to obtain, by the voice of a majority of the ministry and membership, a representative form of church government, which shall extend to the people as well as to the preachers. This enterprise will certainly be accelerated by promoting the circulation of such periodical publications as are of a respectable and redeeming character; and by raising societies whose duty it shall be to disseminate the principles of religious liberty, which need only to be known to insure their adoption; each society appointing a corresponding committee to communicate its operations to such similar institutions as may be formed throughout the United States.

There can be no question as to the efficiency and final result of these measures. They must speedily eventuate in the accomplishment of the necessary reform, and consequently in the union and stability of our Zion. The effects produced in the last four years fully justify this expectation, inasmuch as the late General Conference was nearly equally divided, and that too notwithstanding all the opposition to reform; and it is our decided

opinion that if the elections held at the Annual Conferences south and west of the Susquehannah had been conducted in the usual manner, without recourse to management, the majority in the General Conference of 1824 would have been of a very different character. We are sorry to add, moreover, that those ministers who, by the management referred to, were excluded from seats in the General Conference are such as are generally considered the ablest members of their respective Annual Conferences. From these facts we may safely infer that the fallow ground of the great work of improvement is already broken up, and that at the next General Conference we may expect to realize our hopes.

Besides, in almost every section of this vastly extended community there are enlightened and pious men who are ready to put their shoulders to the work, so that the efforts which we are now about to make will be extensive and simultaneous, and well calculated to effect a reformation without endangering the unity of the body. We shall move forward hand in hand, whilst hundreds of the most important men belonging to the itinerancy bid us God speed, waiting only to hear the voice of the people, and they will co-operate with us.

Attempts have been made to alarm the ignorant with fears lest a reformation should darken the prospect of itinerant ministers and drive them from the work. Upon this subject the feelings of Methodists are one—all unite in one common purpose

to perpetuate and support the itinerant ministry. Their rights and ours are mutual, and we, the committee selected by our brethren for the purpose of sending forth this circular, call upon every department of our community to unite with us in asserting and defending the mutual rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

S. K. JENNINGS, *Chairman*.

JOHN FRENCH, *Secretary*.

At the same time the Baltimore Union Society was formed, which adopted the following

#### CONSTITUTION.

WHEREAS in all equitable ecclesiastical governments it is an acknowledged principle that each member of the community should be secured in his rights as a Christian believer, one of which is a participation in the enactment of such rules and regulations as are necessary to preserve the purity, peace and prosperity of the body, either personally or by his representative; and, whereas the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is so organized as to give to the traveling preachers the sole power "to make rules and regulations for our church," to the entire exclusion of the local preachers and the whole body of the people; and, whereas a large number of the itinerant and local preachers and of the laity desire to have the government of our church so altered as to extend representation to the excluded ministers and to the lay members, it is therefore deemed proper, in order to

ascertain the number of persons in the Methodist Church who are friendly to such alteration, to raise societies in all parts of these United States, to correspond with each other on such subjects as they may believe calculated to improve our church polity; therefore,

*Resolved*, That we, the undersigned members of the Methodist Church in the city of Baltimore, do form ourselves into a Union Society for the above named purposes, and do agree to be governed by the following Constitution :

ARTICLE 1. This society shall be denominated, the Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Baltimore.

ART. 2. The officers of this society shall consist of a President, two Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Corresponding Committee of three members, an Editorial Committee of four ministers and four laymen, all of whom shall be elected annually by ballot.

ART. 3. The President, or in his absence, one of the Vice Presidents, or in the absence of all three, a President *pro tem.* shall preside at every meeting of the society; and every meeting shall be opened and closed with prayer.

ART. 4. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive and hold the funds of the society, subject to its directions, and to render annually a statement of receipts and disbursements, and faithfully to deliver over to his successor in office all the funds, books, papers and effects of this society in his possession.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of the proceedings of the society, and perform such other services as the society may require.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Committee to keep a record of all similar societies of which they gain information, their location and numbers; to correspond with them from time to time as occasion may require; and to lay before the society at its meetings all information in their possession.

ART. 7. It shall be the duty of the Editorial Committee to inspect all original and selected matter that may be presented for publication in the "Mutual Rights," and to suffer no matter to be published in that work until it shall have received the approbation of a majority of said committee; to employ a person to print the necessary number of copies of forty octavo pages each per month; to solicit subscribers and patrons for the publication; and generally to do all matters and things which, in their opinion, are calculated to promote the circulation and usefulness of the work.

ART. 8. An annual meeting of the society shall be held on the first Tuesday in July in each year, and after having transacted such business as may be submitted for their consideration, shall proceed to elect their officers for the ensuing year. On the election of the Editorial Committee, every member of a similar society in any other place, and any brother from a distance, known to be friendly

to reform, shall, if present, be entitled to a vote in the same manner as any member residing in Baltimore.

ART. 9. A monthly meeting of the society shall be held on the first Tuesday of each month.

ART. 10. Any member of the Methodist Church may become a member of this Society by a vote of the same, and by signing the Constitution; and it is expected of every person wishing to withdraw from the association to signify his desire to the Secretary.

ART. 11. This Constitution may be altered or amended at any regular meeting by a majority of two-thirds of the members present, provided such alteration shall have been proposed at a previous meeting.

The position taken by the Baltimore brethren was one that inspired courage in every quarter among the friends of reform. Their association they denominated a "Union Society," we presume from the fact that it was a union of effort by the ministry and laity. The periodical issued by them for similar reasons was called the "Mutual Rights." The Editorial Committee entrusted with the publication of the "Mutual Rights" entered upon the discharge of the duties assigned them with the following address:

#### EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

It will be expected of the Editorial Committee, at the commencement of the arduous and responsible duty assigned to them by their brethren, to give

some account of the motives which have influenced them to accept the appointment; and of the principles by which they are to be governed in the publication of the "Mutual Rights." With a view, therefore, to gratify this reasonable expectation, the committee take occasion to assure their readers that the paramount consideration which has induced them to embark in this service is a settled conviction that an acknowledgment of the rights of each department in the church is essential to the well being of the whole; and that the future prosperity of Methodism in these United States materially depends on such a modification of our church government as shall put every Methodist in full possession of his rights and privileges as a Christian believer.

As individuals they have long deplored the unscriptural and injudicious monopoly of power that has placed in the hands of the itinerant ministry *alone* the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and after a careful investigation of its nature and tendencies, taking into view the enlightened state of society in this country, they are persuaded that nothing less than an improved government, which will secure representation to the *whole church*, and a mutual participation in all her concerns, will produce tranquillity. It will be obvious then to every reader that the motives which have influenced the committee are neither sordid nor selfish, but liberal and disinterested, and that the principles by which they intend to be governed in



editing the contemplated work are the mutual rights of the ministers and members of our church. The chief object of the publication is to realize to the church a practical understanding of the title it assumes. This can be done *only through the medium of a free press.*

The committee are confident that if the Methodist people have a suitable opportunity to compare the arguments adduced on both sides of the great question of reform, permanent harmony may be established among them. Without this they are equally confident that the difference of sentiment which now so extensively prevails will accelerate an equally extensive alienation of affection, and ultimately terminate in great and ruinous secessions from the church. That the Methodist Church is in a state of agitation is a well known fact; and such a state of things calls loudly upon every friend of religion to inquire into the causes which produce it, and to labor for the restoration of harmony and the preservation of brotherly love. To be prepared, however, to perform a becoming part in this important work, it is necessary to enter upon a calm and dispassionate consideration of the subjects in dispute. Modest men will feel no difficulty in admitting the truth of this position; for it is impossible for any man wisely to estimate his own opinions when they differ from those of other men, until he shall have first subjected them to a respectful and scrupulous comparison with the opinions of those who think differently.

To the doctrines of religion as taught by Wesley and Fletcher, and as embodied in the Discipline of our church, the committee fully subscribe. The services of the church, such as extemporaneous prayer and preaching, sacrament of the Lord's supper, baptism, love-feasts, band-meeting and class-meeting, have their entire approbation. Class-meeting, particularly, in the opinion of the committee, is the great means, next to the gospel itself, by which spirituality and order are to be perpetuated among our people. Upon this subject they must be permitted to say they have been trained so long under these doctrines and services that they feel for them all those attachments so natural to men in similar circumstances. And in fact it is because of these and the spirituality of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church that they adhere so firmly to her communion.

It is not in the power of the committee at present to give exact information of every thing which the publication will contain. A periodical miscellany admits of a variety of subjects, and when continued for a length of time receives many communications unknown to the editors at the commencement of the work. It may be said, however, in general terms, the "Mutual Rights" will contain essays on church government, biographical sketches of eminent and pious persons, lectures on divinity and practical Christianity, interesting narratives, philosophical investigations, and a variety of other matter, both amusing and instructive. Well written communi-

cations on any of the above subjects will be thankfully received, and the utmost impartiality observed by the committee.

S. K. JENNINGS, *Chairman.*

The writers who contributed to the columns of the "Mutual Rights" were ministers and members of the highest standing and ability. Distinguished for their talent, their learning, and their usefulness, they were well acquainted with the history as well as with the defects of the government of the M. E. Church; their essays upon church polity being clear, logical and scriptural, justly commended themselves to the consideration of every candid and unprejudiced member of the Methodist communion. They were men whose very names exercised a salutary influence in favor of the cause which they advocated. Of these men a Snethen and a French have gone to their reward, but their names yet live embalmed in the memory of the virtuous and the good who knew them; and to the lives and acts of their compeers who survive them we trust that history will not be slow to do ample justice. And strange as it may appear, yet such is the melancholy fact, that these men who were "burning and shining lights," as well as an ornament and an honor to the church to which they belonged, were traduced by many of their brethren that differed with them in opinion upon church polity; their motives were aspersed, and their names to all intents and purposes cast out as evil. All this was done, not for immorality, not for any

violation of the law of God, but for an honest difference of opinion with regard to expediency concerning church polity. The powers that be in the M. E. Church had become offended, therefore persecution raged. "Several of the anti-reformers availed themselves of the freedom of the columns of the 'Mutual Rights,' and wrote essays in vindication of the Methodist government, as being of divine origin, and the only legitimate church government on earth, and represented the reformers as 'backsliders,' 'under the influence of base motives,' 'enemies of Methodism,' 'opposers of God,' 'instigated by the devil,' &c. &c. Indeed this kind of abusive matter and mere declamation from anti-reformers, accumulated to such a degree that the Editorial Committee of the second volume were under the necessity of restricting those writers to argument alone."\*

The pious reader might ask what had become of that religion which is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and of that charity which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things? But this is a question which must be left for decision to the Judge of all the earth. How strange is such conduct when compared with the spirit of the gospel, which is peace! How painful, too, to the feelings of the reformers to receive such treatment from Christian brethren, principally ministers of the gospel, and that for opinion's sake alone.

\* See history of the Methodist Protestant Church, by Rev. J. R. Williams, page 129.

A distinguished reformer in North Carolina, whilst his spirit was weighed down by the unchristian course pursued towards him by men professing Christianity, expressed himself to a friend thus: "Brother Speight, if it were not for the feelings of my heart I would be an infidel."

During the latter part of the year 1824 the friends of reform, in different parts of the United States, followed the example set them by the brethren at Baltimore, and having the same objects in view, formed themselves into Union Societies. After the organization of the Union Society at Baltimore, and the appeals and addresses of the same were circulated throughout the country, the question of reform not only received a new impulse in North Carolina, but to a certain degree changed its aspect. The laity now came forward with their brethren of the local ministry, claiming their right to be heard, through representation, in the rule-making department of the church. Truth had been disseminated. The light had shined; and by the exercise of "private judgment" they were now brought into action, and made common cause with the ministry to effect a just reformation in the government of the church to which they belonged.

At a meeting of a number of local ministers and laymen of Roanoke Circuit, held at Sampson's meeting-house, Halifax county, North Carolina, on the 6th day of November, 1824, it was moved that the Rev. C. H. Hines open the meeting by prayer; after which the aged and venerable patriot of the

American revolution, the Rev. William Price, was chosen chairman, and Levi H. McLean secretary.

The object of the meeting being explained, and the names of those recorded who were in favor of forming a "Union Society," on the same principles of one lately established in the city of Baltimore, the society proceeded to elect its officers; whereupon the Rev. E. B. Whitaker was elected president, and Exum Lewis vice president; the Rev. Richard Davidson, Rev. Henry Hardy, and Rev. William Bellamy were appointed a corresponding committee; the Rev. James Hunter, the Rev. C. H. Hines, and Levi H. McLean a committee to draft a Constitution for the government of the society, to be presented at its next meeting; also to write an address to the societies in the circuit, explanatory of the objects this society has in view.

The names of the persons who joined the Union Society at this time were,

*Ministers*—Rev. Wm. Price, Rev. Miles Smith, Rev. Wm. Bellamy, Rev. Jas. Hunter, Rev. C. H. Hines, Rev. E. B. Whitaker, Rev. Albriton Jones.

*Laymen*—William E. Bellamy, David Morris, Thomas King, Levi H. McLean.

The society appointed its next meeting to be held on the 4th Saturday in the same month, November, at Bradford's meeting-house, and then adjourned.

Upon its meeting again at the time and place appointed, the following persons united with the society, viz: Rev. Henry Bradford, John F. Bellamy,

L. H. B. Whitaker, Absalom B. Whitaker, Henry B. Bradford, Spier W. Coffield, Lansford W. Scott, P. B. Wiley, Benjamin Hunter, E. B. Whitaker, jr., and Thomas Lowe.

The Constitution, as drafted by the committee appointed at the preceding meeting, was presented and read, and after each article had been discussed, it was adopted in its present form.

#### CONSTITUTION OF ROANOKE UNION SOCIETY.

Man in his primeval state was the noblest work of God on this habitable globe. Although sin has entered into the world, and its deathlike effects have passed on all, yet many vestiges of the noble dignity of man remain, showing his superiority to all other creatures. On man is still placed the image of his Creator in some degree, and to him the guardian care of his God is shown. When it became necessary that the human family should be controlled by a code of laws, we immediately realize the condescending goodness of an all-wise Creator, in furnishing them with such as were most conducive to order and happiness. And when an individual or set of men are placed as rulers over the multitude, it is in regard to their capacity and virtue. When the Israelites, in plain deviation from these just principles, exclaimed, "We will have a king," the Lord Jehovah showed them that the very inclination and consent of mind to such a course was fraught with calamitous events to them and their children after them. The whole subject

evinces to man that with his Creator there is no respect of persons. For when the great Redeemer unfolded to man the grand scheme of his redemption, such was at once the conviction of its universality that it was often called the common salvation. And when a serious controversy had arisen, as recorded in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, relative to the laws of its administration, we have explicitly the voice of the apostles and elders and brethren on the subject. It is evident that our Saviour inculcated the same principles when he said to his disciples, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

From an impartial view of these just, equal and scriptural principles, the inference seems to be irresistible that all men by nature are equal, and that none have a right to assume control but by the voice of general consent; and as the rules and regulations of the Methodist Episcopal Church place the sole governing power in the hands of our itinerant brethren, who have enacted laws for our government without our consent, that infringe upon our civil privileges, while there remains to us no redress—we, therefore, deem it indispensable that the whole matter should be carefully and impartially examined; and that the peace and prosperity of Zion depend greatly upon the forming of Union Societies among us; and as our respected brethren of Baltimore have set us an example at once so laudable and necessary, we resolve, in imitation of them, to adopt the following articles and regulations for the



government of the Roanoke Union Society, auxiliary to the Union Society of Baltimore:

ARTICLE 1. This society shall be composed of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this circuit, together with others of other circuits who wish to become members here.

ART. 2. This society shall be governed by a President and Vice President, who shall be chosen annually by ballot.

ART. 3. There shall be a Secretary, and also a Corresponding Committee consisting of five members, chosen annually by nomination and election.

ART. 4. This society shall meet once in six or twelve months, or oftener, if thought necessary, according to its determination, at such place as shall be fixed on.

ART. 5. This society shall elect a Treasurer, who shall hold the funds of the society, subject to its call.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of each member of the society to pay an annual subscription of from twenty-five cents to one dollar, which money shall first defray the expenses of said society, and if any surplus, shall be appropriated to the publishing of tracts or pamphlets explanatory of the views and aims of the society, and for other useful purposes, tending to the extension of light and information.

ART. 7. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Committee to keep up a regular correspondence with the society at Baltimore, and with other societies or individuals, as this society may direct.

ART. 8. At each meeting of the society the Corresponding Committee shall lay before it the substance of all their communications, and the answers respectively received.

ART. 9. This Constitution shall be subject to such amendments and additions, annually, as a majority of two-thirds of the society shall judge to be expedient.

ELI B. WHITAKER, *President.*

JAMES HUNTER, *Secretary pro tem.*

L. H. B. Whitaker was elected treasurer and William E. Bellamy secretary; Rev. William Bellamy, Rev. R. Davidson, Dr. John F. Bellamy, Absalom B. Whitaker and Philip B. Wiley were appointed a committee of correspondence; Rev. Wm. Bellamy, Rev. C. H. Hines and Dr. J. F. Bellamy a committee to draft rules to govern the meetings of the society.

The next meeting of the society was appointed to be held at Bradford's chapel on the first Saturday in May, 1825.

The society met at Bradford's chapel on the 30th of April instead of the first Saturday in May. After the journal of the last meeting had been read, a door was opened for the admission of such persons as wished to join the Union Society, when the following brethren were received, viz: Rev. William W. Hill, of Matamuskeet circuit, Rev. Miles Nash, of Roanoke, James Whitaker, sr., and Richard H. Whitaker. The committee of correspondence reported no correspondence since the last meeting,

The Rev. W. Bellamy, Exum Lewis and Dr. J. F. Bellamy were appointed an editorial committee to publish such pieces for this society as they may think will tend to promote a reformation in the Methodist Episcopal Church, or promulgate the wishes and views of this society for that purpose. The Rev. James Hunter was appointed an agent to superintend the printing of all such documents, and authorized to apply to the treasurer for money to defray the expenses thereof, as the Constitution directs.

The next meeting of the society was appointed to be held at Bradford's chapel, on the 14th October, 1825. The meeting closed in the usual form with prayer.

The fourth meeting, which was the second annual meeting of the Roanoke Union Society, took place at Bradford's, pursuant to appointment, October 14th. At this meeting the following brethren united with the society, viz: Richard Baxter, Spier Whitaker, James Brent, Wilson C. Whitaker, Jesse H. Simmons, Richard H. Whitaker, Henry Doggett, David Barrow, Burrows Carter, and Rev. Caswell Drake. At this meeting the society numbered thirty-nine members. The doctrines of Mutual Rights had, through the agency and influence of the reformers, spread considerably in Carolina. The circulars and addresses of the committee of correspondence effected much good in enlisting the members of the Methodist communion in the common cause. In order that the tenor of the doc-

trines which they laid down, and the propositions set forth in their addresses, may be fairly understood, the first circular of the society is here introduced.

*Circular to the members of the Methodist Church in  
Roanoke District.*

DEAR BRETHREN,—Your attention is respectfully invited to a momentous question, which is at present and has been for several years greatly agitated and freely discussed among politicians in church and state, both in the old and new world. This question involves at once the very principles of civil and religious liberty and equality. In an early period of our history such a thing as free discussion was not agitated till the dawn of the American revolution; and even at that period we find that this discussion was peculiarly confined to political matters. But in times of more recent date light has gone forth, a spirit of free inquiry has been promoted to great and important lengths, which, in the estimation of hundreds, and perhaps of thousands, has resulted in the conviction that our church polity is not of the most equitable and judicious cast; and an ardent solicitude is now felt and displayed, in different sections of the country, for the modification of our system of church government, so far as to admit amongst us a general equality on the representative principle.


On this subject the General Conference has been addressed in vain. The only alternative is an

appeal to you to unite firmly and piously in an examination of the subject.

To this end your brethren have met, have formed a society, and have appointed proper officers and committees for the management of the society and for general correspondence. A Constitution for said society will be drafted forthwith, and be ratified at a meeting appointed to be held at Bradford's meeting-house on the fourth Saturday in this month.

It becomes our duty, dear brethren, thus to apprise you, and to urge you by all the endearing ties of social concord to meet us there. We ardently wish you to take the subject into serious consideration. The great design is the promotion of truth in the accomplishment of the noble object above stated. Should there, however, be with any a sentiment and feeling opposed to these measures, the subject is open for free and charitable discussion. This may lead to a fair understanding, and to a union of soul that will promote Zion's prosperity. You will understand that no intention exists to split or divide the church, but to form a Union Society for the purpose of communicating freely with one another, and thereby to diffuse light and knowledge relative to the nature and general bearing of our church polity.

We are aware that many say that the societies are not dissatisfied. This can only be known fairly by acquainting ourselves with the subject. Many who have examined the matter are convinced



that great and important alterations can be made for the better; and it is confidently believed that the sooner these can be effected the better it will be. We are sure that the time has arrived when the attempt ought to be made. We, therefore, firmly rely on your co-operation, and remain

Yours, in the bonds of friendship,

JAMES HUNTER, }  
C. H. HINES, } *Committee.*  
L. H. McLEAN, }

The spirit of this address is such as the occasion alone called for. It abounds in no idle declamation, but calmly and dispassionately sets forth the object and views of the reformers. They most plainly declare that "the object is not to split or divide the church, but to form a Union Society, for the purpose of communicating freely with one another, and thereby to diffuse light and knowledge" upon church polity. But the exercise of such liberty gave offence to the advocates of itinerant prerogative, and menaces, rebuke and opposition were soon exhibited by the traveling preachers. The itinerant ministers could talk most loudly upon the principles of church government, and in their General and Annual Conferences could feel at liberty to use the keenest invectives against principles and denounce in the most unmeasured terms measures not agreeable to their judgment or views of sound policy, and none dare to say, why speakest thou thus? Possessed of this right of "free discussion" and of "private judgment," they con-

sidered it their right alone, and were quite unwilling to accord the same right to their brethren of the local ministry and laity. Nor had the two last named classes ever learned that they were not permitted to inquire into the nature of the government of the church, or express their sentiments freely concerning its polity; but they supposed that such rights would be conceded to them on all sides; but the sequel proves they were sadly mistaken. At the meeting of the Roanoke Union Society in April, 1825, the Rev. William W. Hill, of Matamuskeet circuit, was received as a member. Brother Hill had been a minister for several years in the Methodist Church, had rendered her much service as an itinerant; his zeal, learning, talents and eloquence had placed him amongst the most distinguished of her ministry; and although he had now become local, yet his love for the church of his choice was still warm, the lively interest he felt in her prosperity was the same it ever had been; and in becoming a member of the Union Society his object was *to do her good*, and not harm. He was well acquainted with her ecclesiastical polity, had closely observed it in all its bearings and relations, and was well aware that it was susceptible of much improvement. Knowing the local ministry and the laity to be without any representation or voice whatever in the rule-making department of the church, as an impartial and candid Christian, he could but conceive that their rights were unjustly withheld from them; and as an American citizen

and a patriot, he could not understand that he was violating any obligation, either civil or religious, in freely discussing this subject with his Christian brethren. This gave offence to "the powers that be" in the itinerancy; and brother Hill, before the meeting of the Union Society in November, and ere he had been enrolled as a member six months, had become the first object of itinerant persecution in Carolina. In the month of August he was summoned to trial by Rev. Benjamin Edge, assistant preacher on Matamuskeet circuit, and *fairly acquitted of the charges*. Brother Hill forwarded an account of the whole transaction to the Union Society, and the editorial committee published and circulated the same under the title of

A STROKE AT THE ROOT, &c.

*To the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.*

DEAR BRETHREN,—The editorial committee of the Roanoke Union Society take the liberty respectfully to lay before you the following documents, transmitted to us by our worthy brother Hill, a local preacher in our church and a member of our Union Society. We regret that any of our church rulers should so misunderstand that rule in our church discipline which forbids the members of our church "endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrine or discipline," as to think that it can with any propriety be applied to Mr. Hill or any



other reformer, whether he be of the clergy or laity, while merely contending for the right of suffrage.

We have no rule in our book of "discipline" to justify the conduct of Mr. Edge as displayed in these documents. It is, therefore, a manifest abuse of power, and proves the necessity of the reformation for which Mr. Hill and the reformers are now contending.

We do not hesitate to say that the conduct of Mr. Hill and the reformers, in contending for the right of suffrage, cannot be punished by the rules in our church without the aid of an *ex post facto* law.

*Extract of a letter from Rev. William W. Hill to E. Lewis, Esq.*

AUGUST 9, 1825.

BROTHER LEWIS:

With this you will receive the history of an encounter which I have just sustained with Benjamin Edge, assistant preacher of this circuit. His death-warrant, which you will find among the papers in its original form, reached me about dusk in the evening of the 5th of this month. It ordered me to trial on the 7th, at half-past 8 o'clock; and on the 6th I attended meeting twenty miles from home. You will find in the speech I delivered on the occasion a reference to a soliloquy, (so I characterize a piece he forwarded me about three weeks since,) to which you will find a reply in the hand-writing of a gentleman whom I have gotten to transcribe my letter to him. After I forwarded my reply, but before it reached his hand, his notice was served on

me. Having mislaid his soliloquy, I cannot forward the original; the following, however, is the form and substance. He begins at the top of the sheet thus :

DAVID'S BEAUTIFUL IDEA.

How good a thing and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in **UNITY**. It is compared to holy anointing oil. What are professors of religion without union? They only serve for sinners to stumble over to destruction; and it may truly be said, when any member of our church, be he public or private, endeavors to sow dissensions in any of our societies, or to inveigh against the order and government of our church, he not only thereby lays himself liable to censure, but after he is admonished according to discipline, to be cut off if he do not quit it. I have taken some pains to inform myself respecting these men, who on account of a few small things in our discipline, want to raise disturbances in our church, and find that they have backslidden. St. Paul had to complain, Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world. If they would repent and seek more grace, they would no doubt then be disposed to make concessions; and then, perhaps, differences might be settled, and they might be restored. I can truly say I wish the salvation of all men on God's earth.

BENJAMIN EDGE.

As this is the first attempt which I have heard of to enforce the gag-law, the decision may be of some

interest to the reformers. Please write to me as soon as practicable what disposition you will make of it. If you knew the rudeness of the *man*, you could the better account for the severity of my manner, and I hope this will be its apology.

Your brother in Christ, W. W. HILL.

*Rev. W. W. Hill's reply to Benjamin Edge.*

The motto of a soliloquy,—which reached my hands lately, designed, I presume, for my perusal, it having my name appended to its back,—“DAVID'S BEAUTIFUL IDEA.”

The strain commences with the following quotation: “How good a thing and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” The motto and prologue which are here exhibited are both mild. The latter is a plant of celestial growth, and is green and flourishing with the dews of heaven; but like the hyacinth, the lily, or the rose, choked with the thorns and thistles of the forest wild, it may spread a shade for the hissing serpent, or shower its virgin beauties on the deadly asp. Oh! how the heart of sensibility must mourn over this production, which dawns with all the sweet serenity of a vernal morning, and wakes up the gay and innocent emotions of the soul; but ere these lovely fugitives begin to carol and sing, the spirit of the peace-like Phœbus, rising in a sea of fire, frights them into the deep and chilly recesses of nature, and all this joy and lovely scenery, bright as Eden, beauteous as Paradise, becomes the arena of angry

elements, a raging, cloudy ocean, mingled as with rains of an equinoctial storm.

The word unity, as appears from the sequel, is ominously emphasized. Physical union is that law of gravity and attraction by which the atoms of the globe are held united, and as it respects these, it may be called the union of necessity. Moral union, or that which unites men, is effected by various energies ; among the more common are—first, that of policy for mutual benefit ; secondly, those of terror for purposes of partial domination ; thirdly, those of love flowing from mutual affection. The last of those is that for which the psalmist contends in its most refined sense. But which of these does the soliloquist advocate ? If it be the first, and he wish me to become a passive particle in his fairy system, let him metamorphose my nature, as the fairy of Muckelstan Moor did that of the geese which were changed into fragments of grey rock ; and then his all-ruling will, like the law of gravity and attraction, can wield my dust at pleasure. If it be the second, designed for mutual benefit, and he wish me to be a recipient of the common good, let us join in common consultation upon the ground of mutual rights, that we may mutually secure and enjoy the mutual benefit. If it be the third, designed for partial domination, and he wish me to be a vassal held in superstitious chains of terror, let him, like St. Peter's successor, launch a peal of papal thunder at my head, anathematize all my members, interdict fire and water ; and

should he not convert me by these engines of terror, when the United States become the dominions of the pope, and drive from their bosom every republican heretic, I hope his clemency will give me the rocky summit of some western mountain upon which I may waste my days in penitential solitude. If it be the fourth, flowing from mutual affection, that affection, that love which influenced the Lamb of God to die for the world, and which binds the members of Christ's mystical body to each other by ties more tender than ever twined the bones and sinews of the human frame, and he wish me, with himself, to be bound up in the bundle of life, let him cease to write about disaffected members, sowing dissensions, inveighings against discipline, cuttings off, backslidings, Demases, reclaimings, making concessions, adjusting matters, &c. &c. Little did the royal psalmist imagine, when he penned this elegant fragment, which should be the melody of families mingled in love, that it ever should be made a prelude to censures, threats and cuttings off. Let the soliloquist cease to call the "right of suffrage" treason, and free discussions inveighings and dissensions. Let him cease to arraign the motives of his brethren, and attend more to his own. Let him seek more of that zeal and charity that comes from above, and thinks no evil. Let him not mistake that forbearance in his brethren, which his own forwardness alone prompts to formal resistance, for a want of zeal and a loving the world. Let him throw open his Conference doors, and

invite his free brethren in the United States, as members of a common family, to equal rights in the councils of his church; and let him make his concessions for having misconstrued their designs, and having been officiously casuistical respecting their motives. In a word, let him not only wish the salvation of all men, but let him act in a way calculated to promote it, by not thinking more of himself than he ought to think, or less of others; and then he may obtain that free access to the affections of his brethren which he must for ever despair of while he attempts to lord it over God's heritage. If the soliloquist shall think proper to favor me with another effusion, I suggest the following as the subject of his cogitations:—First, let him reconcile the government of his church to the government of the primitive church and the civil government of his country; and then with more propriety he may arraign the motives of those who may refuse their assent to its requisitions. But in the meantime let him not be aggrieved if a free American shall refuse to admit that the *ipse dixit* of a few hundred itinerants should be a rule of faith for three hundred thousand Americans.

## NOTICE FROM REV. BENJAMIN EDGE.

I, Benjamin Edge, assistant preacher, Matamuskeet Banks and Island circuit, send this to notify and request you to attend at the chapel in Matamuskeet on next Sunday, the 7th day in August, A. D. 1825, to appear before a committee of local preach-

ers and before the assistant preacher of the circuit, for the express purpose of answering to the charge of trying to sow dissension in our society, in this quarter and in some other places, and inveighing against some of our rules and church government. You can withdraw under church censure if you see proper, if you do it in a formal manner. The time appointed for the committee to meet is at half-past 8 o'clock. I am a friend to all true Christians.

B. EDGE.

N. B. This was directed on the back to "Rev. Wm. W. Hill, Hyde county, N. C., Matamuskeet."

*The speech of Rev. Mr. Hill before the committee in his own defence.*

FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,—This action and the ground upon which it is sustained crowns me with laurels far beyond my deserts. To be identified with prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the illustrious patriots of all ages and nations, who have bravely resisted tyranny, is a summit of glory to which my humble pretensions never aspired. But here, on the very ground consecrated by the blood of brave Americans, my contending for the right of suffrage is construed into moral treason, for which I am arrested. You, the sons of intrepid veterans, baptized in the blood of slaughtered parents, are called upon to punish as a crime in me the act of contending for the right of suffrage for which your fathers expired. From the shade of that laurel with which the genius of your country shelters her

children, and under which she invites the oppressed and suffering sons of Europe to rejoice and repose, from this shade I am dragged by the grasp of an oppressor before a tribunal, and I stand arraigned as a capital offender. Happy, oh! thrice happy am I, when on the one hand I behold the tribunal before which I stand, and on the other I mark the counts in the bill of indictment. In the patriotism of that congregation composed of the descendants of those gallant men who lashed from their shores the galleys of a civil tyrant, and in the love and justice of that committee, composed of generous spirits doubly free, free from civil and ecclesiastical domination, free from spiritual tyranny, having been emancipated by the Spirit of God, I feel doubly secure. But, friends, mark the items in this death-warrant—first, endeavoring to sow dissensions in our societies, in this quarter and elsewhere; and, secondly, inveighing against some of our rules of church government. Oh! what ground of exultation. Oh! that I was as pure as this arrest would make me. From all that here occurs, I am white as snow and bright as a sunbeam; yet the punishment demanded by the plea, and claimed by the judge at your hands, is official death. After all the vigilance of a regular combination and deep-laid conspiracy against my official life and character, not a vestige of evidence supports the allegation. But, friends, if advocating the right of suffrage be sowing dissension, and contending that lordly combinations in the church of Christ are incompatible with the religion



of Jesus, then indeed I am guilty of the crime for which patriots have bled and martyrs expired.

Wretched indeed is the policy of that church which must be screened from investigation by gag-laws, or protected against opposition by a wall of bayonets. Is this the character which he gives you of Methodism? If so, her interest requires that he should be the culprit and I the prosecutor. But, friends, why should we float upon the surface of this business? Let us dive to the bottom of this deep-laid conspiracy, which strikes at once at the prosperity of our church and the freedom of our country. We this day touch but a remote link of a vastly extended and fearful combination. This freedom of investigation, this devotedness to equal rights, this opposition to lordly encroachments, for which he wishes you to inflict a signal punishment on me, is not the business of a corner nor the reverie of a few factious minds, as he would have you believe, but the work of regular associations, and the boast and glory of thousands of the greatest and best men belonging to our church. If I mistake not, men who are now devoted to the reformation for which I contend, were true to the cause of Methodism when the oldest bishop now in the itinerancy revolted against her. Why have not the bishops, arrayed with their itinerant legions, assailed the editorial committee of the "Mutual Rights," or the other associated societies of the reformers, and crushed this rising Atlas at a stroke? Ah, no! they are but too conscious that

they would be compelled to retire from the assault, like the waves of ocean from a massy rock, foaming in confusion. Why then does he attempt an achievement which the host of his itinerant brethren durst not touch with their little finger? He has rashly calculated upon your weakness and his own strength. With all the ambition and none of the skill of Napoleon, he seeks to divide and then devour. He drags from the dungeon of despotism the chain of his vengeance, and bids you to rivet it on my hands; to paralyze my tongue with the frost of official death, that I might talk no more of heaven, of Jesus, and of freedom, would be the summit of his ambition. Yes, friends, the conclave to which he belongs has found me of some use to my reforming brethren in this State, (pardon this egotism,) and he views me as the shield of freedom and of mutual rights in this section of country. And the materials of which he is made (he being in a great degree devoid of politeness, delicacy and sensibility) qualify him to be a tool in their hands; and as a sort of subaltern or dragoon, the object of his mission, I doubt not, is to harpoon me from the church, and pluck up at once the germ of reformation in this section of country. But I trust you will this day detect his ambition, and exhibit his presumption to naked view, with all its appalling deformities, that it may be whipped through the world with the lash of every generous spirit. And that he may accomplish this work of spiritual havoc the more successfully, he comes under the plausible

appellation of a brother. If he be a brother, it must be by the bonds of religious love, for the ties of consanguinity must be vastly remote. But mark his cold, icy visage: do you behold the rosy glow of sensibility suffuse his cheek, or the tear of sympathy pearl along his visage? Do you behold his bosom swell with the lacerated feelings of an afflicted man who sees a brother about to be immolated? No: but with a sort of stupid sullenness he pants for barbarous triumph; while those little sunken, languid blue flames under his forehead glimmer with the lashes of the inquisition. Is his conduct better than his looks? Has he followed me with the arguments, importunities and remonstrances of an aggrieved brother? Where is the man whom he united with himself in this expedition of love to rescue a wandering brother from error, and bring him back to the right way? No, not a word ever escaped his lips to me on the subject before this day. When he passed up the circuit last a sort of soliloquy reached my hands, having his name affixed, which I should not have known was designed for my perusal had not my name been appended to its back; and before he received my answer he issued his arrest. This I received on Friday evening, demanding my attendance at half-past 8 o'clock the ensuing Sabbath, at which time I had an appointment for two days' meeting twenty miles from home. No allowance was made for the arrangement of a defence, the collection of testimony, nor the adjustment of busi-

ness; but with the promptitude of an eastern slave I must obey this pigmy lord, and leave the world behind. To cap the climax of his brotherhood, he dragged from Carrituck, a distance of thirty odd miles, this man David Ellis, (with whom I have divided my bread and purse, and whose hands I have borne up in this assembly,) and drilled him as the creature of his vengeance for the havoc of this day, while other brethren of far more experience and talents lived within a few miles of the scene of trial; and that he might secure a majority of three he has duped this old Israelite into his deadly policy; a man with whom I have passed ten years of uninterrupted union, and for whom I could almost have died. And in your presence this man has endeavored to act the double part of prosecutor and juror. And if blackness can be added to this portray of darkness, this very man, Benjamin Edge, calling himself brother, minister of Christ, assistant preacher, has ambushed all my peregrinations in social circles of neighborhood conviviality, through which I have passed with all the hilarity and cheerfulness of conscious innocence; he has entered with all the subtlety and venom of a serpent. He has entered into private families and scraped the neighborhood in quest of materials to secure his deadly purpose. He has violated all rules of politeness by seeking to pry into private conversations through all possible mediums. Is this the minister of peace, the herald of Jesus, going about like his Lord and Master to do good? Tell it not in Gath, publish it

not in Askelon. Oh! how my heart sickens at the sight of this mystery of iniquity. And that nothing may be wanting to complete this spectacle of horror you are called upon to aid in this work of domineering vengeance. You, with whom I have spent ten years of the most unsullied communion; you, with whom I have often shared the most hallowed emblems of love, the broken body and shed blood of Christ; yes, you, with whom ten years of my life have passed as softly away as if I had glided on a river of oil; you, with whom I might have softly slept in Jesus had not this disturber come, are called upon to dip your hands in the blood of a brother who never wished you wrong. But, oh! destruction stops not here. Each one of us is the centre of a little community, around which a domestic circle plays. We expect to hand our names over to future ages, and to live in the persons of others, when these bodies, now rosy, nervous and gay, are dissolved and motionless in the dust; nevertheless you are called upon for a verdict which must fester in the hearts of our descendants to the fourth generation, and fling a baleful hue upon the distant scenery of future ages. All this for what? That I may be bound as a victim upon the altar of that man's ambition whose hand trembles to slay me. And what is Benjamin Edge? A passing cloud, a bird of flight, an atom in the breeze, a bubble upon the stream of nature, which must shortly burst and vanish away, a scapegoat of the wilderness, turned loose to wander through the earth and

leave no trace behind. And yet you, the substantialities of civil and religious society; you, the connecting links between the present and future ages, are called upon to give up a member of your own body, a brother, to the vagaries of this vanishing shade. And should you obey his wishes, what account will you give to the tribunal of your own conscience when you retrospect the work of this day, and survey a brother, an innocent man, without a shadow of blame, transfixed by your sentence, and laid low in the dust? What account will you render to the free, intrepid spirits of this assembly, whose eyes now flash with the flames of intelligent scrutiny upon your deliberations, should you punish as a crime in me the act of contending for the right of suffrage, for which their brave ancestors agonized and expired? How will you answer for such an outrage upon the sanctuary of freedom to the awful and violated majesty of these United States, who combine as with the congregated weight of the raging ocean to wreck in an instant the pretensions of any tyrant who shall attempt to violate the rights of their children? What plea will you offer to the advocates of mutual rights in your church, who spurn at lordly encroachments upon the heritage of Christ? And still more, what account will you render to the members of the Roanoke District Conference, from whom you hold your official existence; to whom you stand pledged in the work of reform; and in whom, be you assured, you will find the most inflexible advocates of free

dom, and the most invulnerable opponents to lordly pretensions in the church of Christ? Lastly, how will you account with Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and whose voice is as the roaring of many waters, when he shall ask you why you sealed a brother's lips in silence, and bound him over in chains? Can you expect from him, for such a work, the soul-exhilarating plaudit of "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord?" Will you not rather anticipate that frightful sentence, which will seize your souls as with the convulsions of an earthquake, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire?" This defence is not predicated upon suspicions of the jury; there are men upon that committee with whom I am willing to risk my sublunary all; and over the two who have been the dupes of that man's policy I would cast the mantle of mercy. The collusion of the judge, Benjamin Edge, with that old Israelite who attempted to occupy a place on that jury, but whom I have been so fortunate as to identify as the prosecutor, averse to his own wishes and the expectations of his ally, and for which you have justly removed him from your committee; I say the collusion of those is a lively comment upon a mysterious vision presented to my mind a few nights past. In appearance a tablet of state was before me, bounded on the edges or extremes with broken inscriptions in bright characters, which one requested me to read, whose name I will not mention, but which I could not decipher; immediately through the midst

two hands with arms from the elbows were collaterally extended with all the fingers in full perfection; and although the ground of the tablet was like slate, and the color of the hands the same, yet the latter appeared in full relief and clear distinction; the whole appeared to emit a fervid glowing, like a piece of iron in a state of fusion. This instant brings the interpretation. Those collateral hands are those two men combined against me; the color of the tablet is the blackness of the plot; the fervid glowing is the characteristic of the spirit which conducts it. Further I will not go; but I wait for time and circumstances to develop the remaining mystery. But the charities of my heart are still enlisted in behalf of my prosecutor, and I could wish that the part he has acted in this afflicting tragedy could be wiped from the memory of his survivors, for his days are evidently almost run, and I am loth to see this stain affixed to his memory. But that man, Benjamin Edge, is the first traveling Methodist minister who ever reached this neighborhood without sharing in my sympathies and support; and even now the charities of my heart should overflow towards him in rich effusion did not justice to myself, my church and my country sternly forbid it. There is a point beyond which forbearance is an abuse, and we have reached it; and under the stern demands of principle I am now compelled to reverse in this instance the order of my whole life, and to recommend him (for his good) to your justice; a justice, nevertheless, blended



with mercy. Teach him to respect the rights of your church and country; let him know, freemen of Hyde, that until he shall do this you will do without him, and that he shall do without you; let him know that you tolerate his performances now more out of respect to his church than out of respect to his talents. Let him learn that that man, John Giles, a member of your own community, who rears a family for the commonwealth, can hold the handle of his plough every day of his life, and infinitely transcend him in talents, though he devote himself to his profession alone; and, indeed, where is the man on that committee who is not better qualified for public usefulness than he is? And, my brethren of the laity, while I really feel myself an unprofitable servant in the main, yet I am glad for your sake that the stroke which he has leveled at your freedom has fallen upon me as your shield. I hold myself ready to be the pack-horse of your burthens, and am prepared to share in your joys and sorrows; and I assure you that the devotedness of this day will never escape my fondest recollections.

And now, my brethren of the committee, bring in a verdict which shall comport with the interests of your church and the rights of your country, and I shall be satisfied.

The committee reported—"No cause of action." Was ever a vindication more triumphant? Was ever innocence more nobly or manfully defended

than upon this occasion? No immorality whatever was charged against the Rev. Mr. Hill; but the specifications were for inveighing against discipline and sowing dissension in societies. Was it not passing strange that Benjamin Edge should undertake to expel the defendant in this case from the pale of the church, depose him from the sacred office of the ministry, put the seal of official silence upon his lips for ever, and arrest him from pointing sinners to the Lamb of God any more? And all this, too, for expressing his opinion concerning the government of the church of which he was a member; an unalienable right which every Christian and patriot possesses in Columbia's heaven-favored land. Who can read brother Hill's defence without admiration? How scathing it must have been to the feelings of the judge, if, indeed, he possessed much sensibility. One might conclude, from what he encountered and suffered on that occasion, that the Rev. Mr. Edge would ever afterwards suffer the friends of reform to rest in peace; but we shall perhaps hear from him again before the close of this history. The address or defence, although *severe*, should be read by every lover of mutual rights; and generations yet to come will admire the man and applaud the Christian that thus boldly and fearlessly encountered the spirit of tyranny, and successfully withstood the insidious efforts of the strong hand of oppression.

## CHAPTER III.

*Protest of the Roanoke Union Society against the ninth section of Discipline.—Formation and Constitution of Granville Union Society in North Carolina.—Trials and expulsions of some of its members.—Correspondence between Ivey Harris and Rev. William Compton with regard to the expulsions.*

AT the annual meeting of the Roanoke Union Society a committee was appointed to review the ninth section of the book of Discipline, as revised by the General Conference of 1824, and make report thereon. The General Conference, in the passage of the rules contained in that section, had touched a most delicate question, especially so to the people of the south. Slavery is an institution that is regulated by law in the States where it exists. Laws are enacted from time to time by the legislatures of such States for the special government and regulation of that class of people. Many individuals who are members of the church are connected with slavery, and that, too, not through choice or action of their own, but by the very circumstances of birth. The customs which obtain with respect to it are thought, by those who have the best opportunities of knowing, to be the most conducive to the welfare of all concerned. And whenever an ecclesiastical body interferes with a subject that belongs more properly to the legislative hall, grounds of offence are given, and discord

ensues; and it is much regretted by the *true* friends of humanity and of religion that the misguided zeal of both religionists and philanthropists has been such as to militate against the temporal and spiritual interests of both classes of the colored population in the southern States.

The action of the General Conference, by the adoption of the ninth section of Discipline upon the subject of slavery, created dissatisfaction among the people of the southern States; and in the south, generally, the rules of said section have remained to this day a dead letter. The committee that was appointed to review this section of the book of Discipline brought in a protest, which, after some discussion, was amended and adopted, and stands on record in the following form and words:

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

“Open rebuke is better than secret love.”

*Extract from the Methodist Discipline, as revised by the General Conference of 1824.*

#### SECTION IX.—Of Slavery.

QUESTION. What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?

ANS. 1. We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery. Therefore, no slave-holder shall be eligible to any official station in our church hereafter where the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom.

2. When any traveling preacher becomes the owner of a slave or slaves by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the State in which he lives.

3. All our preachers shall prudently enforce upon our members the necessity of teaching their slaves to read the word of God; and to allow them time to attend upon the public worship of God on our regular days of divine service.

4. Our colored preachers and official members shall have all the privileges which are usual to others in the District and Quarterly Conferences, where the usages of the country do not forbid it. And the presiding elder may hold for them a separate District Conference, where the number of colored local preachers will justify it.

5. The Annual Conference may employ colored preachers to travel and preach where their services are judged necessary; provided that no one shall be so employed without having been recommended according to the form of Discipline.

#### PROTEST TO NINTH SECTION.

1. We believe the answers given to the foregoing question to be injurious to the refined sensibilities of white men; because, in the first place, it exhibits the late General Conference as a body of white men unnaturally and most zealously engaged for the social advancement and official promotion of colored

men in the Church, in opposition to her ancient usages; and that, too, without her consent in person or by proxy.

2. Because the arrangement in the fourth item confounds the white and colored officers of the church in the Quarterly Conferences, and the white and colored preachers in the District Conferences, without the sanction of the church or the previous consent of parties.

3. Because the same item grants to colored preachers the twofold prerogative of mixing with the whites in the District Conferences, and a separate conference for themselves, which guarantees to them the harmony and exclusive advantage of a private interview with the presiding elder of their respective districts.

4. Because the fifth item authorizes the Annual Conferences to employ colored preachers to travel and preach without the consent of the people to whom they are destined to preach.

5. Because the third item makes it the duty of the preachers to enforce upon our members the necessity of learning their slaves to read, and allow them time to attend preaching, as one of the various means devised (in said answer) for the extirpation of the evil of slavery; thus secularizing the word and worship of Almighty God.

6. Because the foregoing arrangements subject the white members (in case of an appeal) to be tried by a parti-colored Quarterly Conference, as the case may happen.

7. Because the said answer opens to men of color the shortest and cheapest road to social consequence and official promotion to be found in the United States, or even in christendom; consequently, they will inundate the church, and eventually subject the whites to their official control.

8. Because said answer cannot fail to increase the insolence of the slaves and free people of color, and consequently expose them to exemplary punishment at the hands of their owners and State authorities under which they live.

This answer is also calculated to excite the opposition and contempt of our fellow citizens in the southern and western States against our traveling preachers. First, because it was given by a General Conference composed of the representatives of our traveling preachers, some of whom were the subjects of the British government. Secondly, because this answer contemplates the extirpation of the evil of slavery by the literary and pulpit instruction of the slaves, and the official promotion and agency of people of color. Thirdly, because this answer enjoins upon our preachers an interference with the civil and domestic concerns of the slave-holding States. Fourthly, because this answer has a direct tendency to sow the seeds of domestic discontent, and to create conspiracies in the southern States.

For the above reasons we do most solemnly **PROTEST** against this ninth section of our Discipline.

Signed in behalf of the Roanoke Union Society,  
ELI B. WHITAKER, *President.*

At a subsequent meeting of the society the committee on ways and means reported a resolution which was adopted, that copies of the ninth section of the Discipline, with the accompanying *protest*, be printed and extensively circulated.

The grounds taken by the authors of the protest are considered by many as imaginary or chimerical, that there is nothing in the ninth section calculated to produce any of the effects spoken of in the protest. If so, why have not the preachers in the southern States proceeded to execute the requisitions of that section? So far as the knowledge and observation of the writer extend, they suffer them to sleep: it has lived as a dead letter in the book. The subject was too delicate for the southern ministers to handle. The times, customs and laws all conspired to dictate to them a more prudent course, and that was to leave the subject where they found it.

Some time in the early part of the year 1826 the organization of the Granville Union Society took place. Its objects were the same as those of the Roanoke Union Society. Both were desirous to see a reformation effected in the government of the church to which they belonged. But such was the opposition manifested by clerical authority or itinerant supremacy, that the former society was soon destined to pass through a fiery ordeal. In a few days after their organization the preacher in charge began to manifest a disposition to break up the Union Society, and crush the spirit of reform as



it were by his mere *ipse dixit*. The writer begs leave to introduce here a "letter from the Granville Union Society to the Baltimore Union Society, giving an account of the late proceedings against reformers, and asking advice."

DEAR BRETHREN,—On the fourth Friday and days following in July, 1826, we met at Plank Chapel meeting-house, in Tar River Circuit, for the purpose of organizing a Union Society, which we proceeded to do, after prayer, in the following manner:—A brother arose and proceeded to inform the congregation of the objects of the meeting, namely, to unite for the purpose of petitioning the General Conference to grant to the Methodist Episcopal Church an equitable representative form of government; and after having answered all the objections which he had heard urged by the old side brethren in a very satisfactory manner, he called on all who were friendly to the wished for amendment to take seats in one square of the meeting-house, which was accordingly done. We then proceeded to elect our officers. Anderson Paschall, President; Lewellyn Jones, Vice President; and Rev. Jesse H. Cobb, Secretary. There were about fifteen persons who became members of this society at that meeting, who proceeded to adopt the following

#### CONSTITUTION

OF THE GRANVILLE UNION SOCIETY OF N. CAROLINA.

Whereas it is an acknowledged principle, in all equitable and well regulated ecclesiastical govern-

ments, that each member should be guarded as a Christian in his rights and privileges, the principle of which is the right of representation in the law-making department, either personally or by his representative; and as it is a well known fact that according to the present form of the government of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, the itinerant brethren have arrogated to themselves and do exercise exclusive authority in the government of the same; and whereas a minority of the itinerant preachers and a large number of the laity and locality are desirous to have the government of our church so revolutionized as to secure equality of representation to local and lay members:

We therefore deem it advisable in matters so important to form ourselves into a society, for the purpose of corresponding with our brethren within the United States who are favorable to a reform, on such subjects as will tend to improve the form of our church government. And we do adopt for the government of the society the following regulations:

ARTICLE 1. This society shall be denominated the *Granville Union Society*, auxiliary to the Baltimore Union Society.

ART. 2. The officers of this society shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Corresponding Committee of five members, who shall be elected annually, all of whom shall be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

ART. 3. It shall be the duty of the President, and in his absence, the Vice President, to preside at every meeting of the society, to call a special meeting whenever the situation of the society may require it, and open and close the meeting with singing and prayer.

ART. 4. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to take charge of the funds of the society, and render annually, or oftener, if the society require it, a statement of receipts and expenditures; and to deliver to his successor in office all moneys, papers, books, &c., remaining in his possession.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a strict record of the proceedings of the society.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Committee to correspond with the Baltimore Union Society, and all other societies and persons as the members of this body may from time to time direct, and lay before the society at each meeting such communications.

ART. 7. Any person may become a member of this society who is friendly to a reform, by signing his name to this Constitution, or by a written communication to the society, provided he is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

ART. 8. This society shall meet at such times and places as shall be appointed, and contribute to defray the expenses of the same.

ART. 9. There shall be an annual meeting of this society on the 4th day of July, at Harris's meeting-

house, for the purpose of electing officers and transacting other business.

**ART. 10.** This Constitution may be altered or amended at any meeting of the society, provided a majority of the members be present, and two-thirds of them concur in such alterations or amendments.

A few days after the meeting some of the old side brethren informed the preacher in charge (Rev. B. Field) that there had been a union meeting, and that six of the society under his charge at Plank Chapel had become members. Upon the receipt of this information the preacher forthwith sent to each of them the following reproof:

"I am sorry to learn that you, with several others, have associated in order to use your endeavors to sow dissensions in our societies by inveighing against the discipline of our church. It therefore now becomes my painful duty as preacher in charge to administer reproof to you for your unscriptural and peace-destroying conduct; and if you see proper to yield to reproof so far as to engage in future to leave off such pernicious conduct, I shall *rejoice* to hear the same; but if you refuse, you thereby bring me under the necessity of calling you to account before the church to answer for your conduct."

On the receipt of this reproof not one of them could feel guilty, or a disposition to comply with its requirements, for this obvious reason, the charges contained in it were false and groundless. They

were nevertheless cited to trial. Four of the laymen were ready. The trial commenced by exhibiting the charges, and by an attempt on the part of the preacher to substantiate them. Herein he utterly failed. He, however, intent on his purpose, changed his ground, and proceeded to examine some witnesses respecting their opinions of Union Society meetings. The witnesses stated in reply that they thought they were calculated to sow dissensions in the church. The preacher in charge then asked the accused for their defence. Brother Lewellyn Jones, a man of irreproachable life, proceeded by asking permission to read his defence, alleging that he labored under some constitutional impediment which tended to injure extempore speaking. On a cold admission of his request, he began, but was ordered immediately to desist, under pretence that it was irrelevant. A friend then offered to prove Jones's innocence by his declaration as contained in the Constitution of the society, but he too was ordered peremptorily to sit down. "When your evidence is wanted I will call for it," said the preacher in charge. Macon, who stood charged next, alleged in his defence that the object of their association in the Union Society might be plainly developed by reading its Constitution, and asked permission to do so, but this was refused him; he then asked leave to read only two items in the Constitution, this was also most peremptorily denied. A brother Valentine was then called on for his defence, who only pleaded his innocence of

the crimes charged in his indictment, and then submitted. A brother Hunt, a young man, was called on last, who simply said he meant no harm, nor had he said one contentious word; those with whom he had associated were his particular acquaintances, and he had every reason to believe were his best friends, and some of them his fathers in the gospel as well as kindred after the flesh; he had intended no harm, and had said nothing that could give offence. But his plea of innocence before such a tribunal could avail nothing. His staunch pursuer proceeded to pronounce the unrighteous verdict which excommunicated him and his three suffering brethren from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

If this conduct become notorious, we cannot conceive with what grace preachers can ever invite another soul to become a member of our church, while membership is so uncertain; will not unprofessing men of correct views warn their children and friends of the danger of being disgraced by some bigoted, unfeeling mortal, who may seek to execute his authority upon them, if they should be so unfortunate as to differ from him in matters of church polity?

It is true these expelled brethren were brought before the class of which they were members, but, alas! there were found enough tools of priestly authority to give a vote, from which the preacher inferred his right to expel them all—for you must know that when the question was put to the society

it was not as it should have been, guilty or not guilty, as charged; but says the priest, "all of you who think their conduct will have a bad effect will signify it by rising up;" which question you will perceive had no relation to the charge. There was also a local preacher of the same class who was charged with just the same crimes, who was tried four days after by a committee of local preachers, and although the preacher in charge used the most vigilant caution to prevent any reformer, or even any who were suspected of being reformers, to sit on his trial, yet he was acquitted without any acknowledgment of errors on his part; there being a local preacher on the committee whose common sense and religious soul could triumph over party prejudices. The committee however instructed the preacher in charge to give a private reproof to the acquitted preacher and to advise him not to say much more on the subject of reform hereafter. The trial of the other brother has not yet taken place, he having removed before he was ready to meet it.

Brother Lewellyn Jones appealed to the quarterly meeting conference, and his case was there reconsidered by a large portion of the old side official members of the circuit to which he belonged. A considerable debate took place; for there were some generous, undaunted souls in the conference, who dared to plead the cause of innocence and mutual rights; during the discussions, the presiding elder for a while left the chair and introduced a

doctrine which we hope will meet the contempt which it merits, namely, that men may forfeit church privileges without committing an immoral act, and instanced a case or two in criminal cases, where men had been punished as thieves and rogues who had not actually stolen any thing; and that men had been dealt with as Tories who had not loaded their gun nor pulled a trigger; alleging that the keeping company with rogues and Tories was sufficient proof of guilt. Having performed this task, he resumed the chair and put the vote; and the majority confirmed the sentence from which brother Jones had appealed.

We would conclude this communication by asking the advice of the Baltimore Union Society and their prayers in this matter. We declare, as to ourselves, that all these things do not move us. We hope that we are ready "not only to be bound but to die" in that cause which has ever appeared to us a reasonable and religious one; and we are glad to say that we believe this flagrant outrage on our dearest rights will have a healthful bearing on our cause. It has already awakened a spirit of inquiry and sympathy, and numbers are saying "let us die with them;" and we believe that our cause and numbers will always increase in exact proportion to the increase of light upon the subject.

Since writing the above the preacher in charge in Tar River Circuit has proceeded to expel three or four more members for joining the Union Society,



one of whom was a preacher. Further communications will be made hereafter.

We remain, dear brethren, yours in the bonds of a peaceful gospel.

ANDERSON PASCHALL, *President.*

JESSE H. COBB, *Secretary.*

After reading the preceding constitution, one would not suppose that simply subscribing thereto, and thus becoming a member of the Granville Union Society, would (upon reasonable principles) constitute "sowing dissensions in society," or "inveighing against discipline." But man loves power, and the formation of the Union Society had in contemplation a reformation in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, so as to abridge the authority to a certain extent of the itinerancy. This was the head and front of their offence. And although this was their undoubted right, as they interfered with no just rights of other men, yet in the eyes of itinerant supremacy it was regarded as a crime, and in order to attach odium was called by another name, "sowing dissensions in society and inveighing against discipline." Hence, for this offence against what we might call the strong hand of ecclesiastical power, these innocent, respectable, and upright members of the M. E. Church were made to feel *most grievously* its injustice and oppression, by being excluded from the church of their choice.

It is the exercise of unjust power that constitutes tyranny, either in church or state; and no tyranny

has been more cruel or relentless in the world than that which has been exercised by clerical despots. It was that which brought a Latimer and a Ridley to the stake. It was that which established the bloody inquisition in Spain. It was that which made Italy what she is. And it was but a modification of the same spirit that cast those seven members of the Granville Union Society from the bosom of the church. And strange to relate, there were professing Christians, even in Carolina, where independence first drew her native breath, that thought and believed that it was right thus to eject members from the church militant, not for any immorality, but for opinion's sake upon church polity alone.

The manner in which that aged Christian man, Lewellyn Jones, was treated by the quarterly meeting conference to which he had appealed, drew forth the sympathies of many of his brethren in his behalf. His age, his piety, his standing in the community, all conspired to render him a fit sacrifice to be immolated upon the altar of "mutual rights." The expelled members thus divested of membership in the church, appealed to the annual conference, as well as sent up charges against the superintendent for mal-administration; but the conference decided it was not mal-administration! Will any lover of justice or truth pretend to say, in view of all the circumstances, there was no need of reformation in the government of the church that tolerated such high-handed measures as these, or

could look with approbation upon such tragic scenes? If so, surely he does not breathe American air.

In order that the inquirer after truth may know what feelings and views were held by the preacher in charge, Rev. Wm. Compton, in reference to the expulsion for opinion's sake, we will bring forward a correspondence that ensued between Mr. Ivey Harris and the Rev. Wm. Compton in relation to the expulsion of Lewellyn Jones of N. Carolina, who had appealed to the quarterly-meeting Conference, held at Kingswood meeting house.

*Letter from Mr. Ivey Harris to Rev. W. Compton.*

DECEMBER 17, 1826.

RESPECTED SIR:

You will perhaps be surprised when you see the name of him who now addresses you; but I hope you will excuse the liberty I take, when I tell you that my mind has for some weeks been dwelling on a subject in regard to which you may possibly afford me some satisfaction. I had thought to address you sooner, but hoped that my mind might receive additional light by prayer and meditation on the subject; but I must confess that if any light has been communicated, it has been calculated to involve in deeper mystery the particular act to which I allude. You cannot be at a loss for my allusion, when I refer you to the last quarterly meeting conference, held at Kingswood meeting house, Tar River Circuit, and particularly to the part you

acted in that awful tragedy on that occasion. And now, my dear brother, permit me to propose several plain questions in the spirit of meekness: and first, was there any evidence adduced on that occasion that convicted our venerable father in Israel, Lewellyn Jones, of any act or word against the laws of God or man, more than was adduced in the case of brother Hunt, at Plank Chapel? I think you will not say there was. Why then the difference in your verdict respecting the two brethren? Is it that you erred in the first instance and have since received more light? The fact is, evidence against him there was none, and that in his favor was not admitted. Secondly, was our aged brother convicted or even accused of any thing that in your estimation would exclude him from the kingdom of heaven? If not, why give your vote to exclude him from the militant church? Thirdly, can it be possible that the shameful attempt of the president of that meeting to identify the reformers with thieves and tories was so influential as to cause any member of that body to strike the fatal blow? I suppose that the thing is, perhaps, possible as it respects some, but charity and long acquaintance forbid me to think that my brother Compton can at all be subject to such influence. But should you say that remarks about *thieves* and *tories* were only by way of simile or comparison, I would just ask how much better character can the reformers sustain in the estimation of any man who will raise his hand to inflict the stroke of moral death on an

old soldier of the cross, solely because he joins them in an humble petition to the powers that be for an equitable representative government, and is so unfortunate as to be found sitting on the same seats with them? Fourthly and lastly, be so good as to let me know whether it was either just or generous in you to name what was said by some body in Raleigh on the subject of reform, and by some one else in Virginia, and try to transfer their guilt to the venerable and trembling victim before you, who could no more prevent what those unknown men had said than your youngest child could prevent the sin of our first parents.

And now, my brother, permit me to observe, before I close, that language fails to describe the feeling of my heart when I heard that the sentence against the old brother was confirmed by a large majority; and my feelings were still more poignant, when I heard that my brother Compton, on whom I most depended, as in the case of brother Hunt, to repel the shafts of despotism, prejudice and ignorance, had lent a hand and the strength of his influence to hurl an old disciple of Christ over the battlements of the church from such premises. But it is my firm belief that scores and hundreds of reformers will arise from the ashes of our aged and injured brother. Such measures will wake up reflection in thinking minds. Republican principles and equal rights are too precious to relinquish in a civil capacity, and thousands are beginning to see that Christ's *freemen*

should enjoy, at least, equal privileges. Be assured, my brother, that thousands of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, many of whom are among the most intelligent, are ready to be immolated on the same altar on which our beloved brother Jones expired; and I must take the liberty here to state that apart from the little spark of grace which charity requires me to hope the members of that quarterly conference yet retain, and having the civil authority to support them, I would almost as soon be tried by the popish inquisition as by some of the members of that tribunal. You will observe that I say *some* of them, for there are some of whom I feel united to by the strongest ties of brotherly love.

And now, my dear brother, permit me in the conclusion to assure you that I feel nothing in my heart towards you contrary to Christian union and fellowship, for I am conscious that the best of men may err in their zeal for what they believe to be a good cause; and my record is on high that I have not written a single word with a design to irritate your feelings, and I hope you will regard my plain remarks only as the effusions of a full soul. And further, I would request you (if I have not shared the common fate of my reforming brethren—if I have not entirely lost your Christian confidence) to favor me at least with a few lines in answer to the foregoing questions, particularly the first, second and fourth. And I most sincerely pray Almighty God that if light should be afforded from any source,

I may possess a mind open to conviction and capable of receiving it. Respectfully Yours,

IVEY HARRIS.

REV. W. COMPTON.

P. S. I would yet observe, with regard to our brother George W. Nolly, that I congratulate him on the comfortable hope that he will escape the "heaviest lashes of the next Virginia Conference," in consequence of having to return a "factious party" about Harris's meeting house, if not as "thieves and Tories," yet as being quite above law, and entirely ungovernable. I. H.

*Letter from Rev. Wm. Compton to Mr. Harris.*

DECEMBER 26, 1826.

BROTHER HARRIS:

Yours of the 17th was received by me this morning. You request an answer, particularly to your first, second and fourth questions, provided you have not (in my estimation I suppose you mean) shared the same fate with your reforming brethren. Were you placed before me in the same relation with your "venerable father in Israel, Lewellyn Jones," I should deal towards the son as I dealt in reference to the father. Nevertheless I write to you because you so earnestly request it. You ask, under question first, "was there any evidence adduced that convicted our venerable father in Israel, Lewellyn Jones?" Most assuredly. His subscribing to the constitution of the Union Society (so called), the object of the votaries of which I have

reason to believe, as to the major part of them, is to "revolutionize" the system of Methodist Church government, and so to alter its economy as finally to destroy itinerancy and establish a congregational system among us. You may say "God forbid." If so, and you be sincere, this only vindicates yourself, but is no plea for any other member of your fraternity. But you ask, "had you not the same evidence in relation to James Hunt?" &c. I knew that he was a member of the same body with Lewellyn Jones, but I had paid but a superficial attention to your constitution, and therefore did not act upon that as evidence at all, but solely upon the testimony of the witnesses in the case, whose testimony I considered as only amounting to circumstantial proof against said Hunt. This I stated in quarterly conference, and further added that, if I had been governed by the constitution of the Union Society, I would have given my voice to silence him. You inquire, under question second, "was our aged brother convicted, or even charged with any thing that in your estimation would exclude him from the kingdom of heaven? If not, why give your vote to exclude him from the church militant?" The plain English of this is, that no person ought to be excluded from the Methodist (which you are pleased to call the militant) Church, unless he be guilty of something that would exclude him from the kingdom of heaven. This plea I think was sufficiently met by brother Howard.\* But as

\*The presiding elder.



most of us are forgetful hearers of those things which confute our strongest arguments in favor of a beloved theory, it may not be amiss to repeat the substance of at least a part of what he said. And to make this more forcible, permit me to preface it with one or two questions. Will you say that the Presbyterians because they are Calvinists, or the Baptists because they deny infant baptism and free communion; or the Protestant Episcopalians because they contend for a regular succession in the ministry, are heretics and ought therefore to be excluded the kingdom of heaven? Let your conscience answer. Now if the opinions of neither the one nor the other of these denominations are sufficient to exclude a man the kingdom of heaven, then neither are the opinions of the whole, provided they were concentrated in one man. Let us then suppose Lewellyn Jones to be this man. In sentiment he is a Calvinist—he denies infant baptism and free communion—and contends that none ought to preach the gospel but those who can prove their ministerial authority in a direct line from Christ;—through the apostolical Church—through the church of Rome—and through the Protestant Episcopal Church. You, I suppose, would say that he is not to be excluded the Methodist (that is to say, the militant) Church, because of the peculiarity of his sentiments. Is this the way you argue? Or is this the “freedom” of which you so often speak, and which, from your course of reasoning, one would think is one of the constituent parts of your contemplated

change in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church? If so, what I did in the case of your "venerable father in Israel" I conceive to have been one of the best acts of my life. L. Jones may or may not be a good man, and so of I. Harris; it is not for me to say. But when a man subscribes to an instrument of writing, the express object of which is to "revolutionize" the government of the Methodist Church, I think it my duty as a member of said church to be decided in my stand against him. And for this reason I have resolved to be no longer neutral in the matter.

You ask, fourthly and lastly, "was it either just or generous in you to name what was said by some body in Raleigh on the subject of reform, and by some one else in Virginia, and thus try to transfer their guilt to the venerable and trembling victim before you?" &c. I think both. For certainly I, as a Methodist, ought to be open of heart (which is one definition of the term generous, and the one I suppose intended) in vindicating the church to which I belong, and to which, under God, I owe my religious existence. That is, I ought to keep nothing concealed which would be to the advantage of said church. And I think it very advantageous to Methodism that those who are dividing our Zion against herself should be traced out and exposed in all their ramifications, both as it relates to themselves and to those with whom they are connected in the great work of *revolutionizing* the government of the church. I have said both, of course what I

did I consider an act of justice as well as of generosity. I will suppose a case : C is found carrying off the body of a murdered man ; upon examination it is ascertained that A caught the deceased and held him fast, that B threw him down, and that C stabbed him through the heart. They are all tried, and being found accessory to the man's death, are all brought in guilty, and must die. In vain A pleads that he only caught and held the deceased, and B that he only threw him down. The law says that they shall die. But Ivey Harris asks "whether it is just to name what B and C did on the trial of A, and so to transfer their guilt to him?" who, perhaps, may say that he had no idea that matters would have been carried so far. But the law says that he must die. Now who is to determine the case? The court by which these men were tried, or Ivey Harris? Transfer the idea, and the thing is explained. Thus, brother Harris, you may perceive what my views are, and what I have to offer for the side I took on the trial of Lewellyn Jones and Thomas Hunt, though you have not mentioned the young man, but seemed altogether concerned for your "father in Israel."

You ask permission to propose several plain questions, I will also ask it to make several plain statements. And *first*, I think L. J. is justly expelled, yet I think he is not so culpable as those of Harris's class, through whose influence he and others have been turned aside from the simplicity of the gospel.

In the course of my observations, I have seen that those fiery zealots for what you call reform, are not the humble, patient, meek and happy souls they once were. As ministers, they are not the soul awakening, soul converting and soul saving preachers of righteousness they once were. Instead of their time being devoted to prayer, religious conversation, and trying to further the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom when they meet, and especially if they think there is the least chance to make proselytes to their side of the question, it is almost totally taken up in talking about church government. This is their *Alpha* and *Omega*. And yet, strange to say, you call these *non-essentials*. And will you, for the sake of non-essentials, distract the body to which you belong so far as you have influence? Will you give the adversary to speak reproachfully of religion, and arm the enemies of Christ with arguments against the truth? Would you not be more profitably engaged in trying to "provoke each other to love and to good works?"

Secondly: you may observe that I have made no reply to what you have said against brother Howard and others of the Quarterly Conference. This I have not refrained because you exempt me, for I ask no such exemption. I wish to be involved in the same righteous condemnation with my brethren of that conference. If they were unfeeling and unmerciful because of the part they took against Lewellyn Jones and Thomas Hunt, so was I. If for this they are "inquisitors," so am I. In a word,

I do not like to be flattered. I am equally praise or blameworthy with those true friends of old Methodism. The reason why I say no more is not because any thing you have said is unanswerable, but because I wish every man to fight his own battle. And now, to close the whole, I would propose that you and I pray more and talk less about non-essentials. That we read the Bible more, and try to get more religion; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Finally, I have not written with an eye to a paper war, and therefore, though I fear not to defend the truth, I wish this to be both the beginning and the end of all controversy with you or any of your fraternity, on the subject of government.

Yours respectfully,

WM. COMPTON.

*Mr. Harris's reply to Rev. Wm. Compton.*

JANUARY 7, 1829.

REVEREND SIR:

I received yours of the 26th ultimo, on yesterday evening, and believe it to be my duty to make a few remarks on it; although when first I addressed you, I assure you, sir, that I had no intention of opening a "paper war" with you, but only intended, from a firm reliance on the God of the armies of Israel and on the justice of my cause, to throw a single stone. And yet I think that young David chose him five smooth stones when he went against Goliath; which seems to imply that if the first had

not been effectual, he would have slung a second. Having so bright an example, I have determined to forward you a second, which although, perhaps, not quite so smooth as the first, yet your indirect charge of flattery shall be my apology for slinging it just as it is. And, with the assistance of grace, I promise you, sir, that I will not offend you with flattery on the present occasion. And I further promise you that I will be as concise as possible, consistently with my determination to bring into plainer view the most prominent features of your very exceptionable reply. The first sentence in your letter that deserves notice is as follows: "Were you placed before me in the same relation with your venerable "father in Israel," I should deal towards the son as I dealt in reference to the father." I will only say, as it respects myself, that I most cheerfully accept the will for the deed in this case, and will only add a consoling line from the celebrated Young:

When naught but purpose is within thy power,  
That purpose firm is equal to the deed.

In quoting my first question, you stop abruptly in the middle, and answer, "most assuredly, his subscribing to the constitution of the Union Society (so called), the object of the votaries of which I have reason to believe, as to the major part of them, is to revolutionize the system of Methodist Church government, and so to alter its economy as finally to destroy itinerancy and establish a congregational system among us," &c. Now if the single circum-

stance of L. J. having subscribed his name to the paper referred to, amounts to proof sufficient in the mind of any reasonable man on whom the sun ever shone, that it was his intention by that act to contribute his mite to accomplish the deleterious objects which you are pleased to ascribe to a majority of the reformers; then, sir, there might be some propriety in your asking respecting him, as the high priest did concerning Jesus, "What need we any further witness." Permit me first to inquire, with regard to L. J., whether there is any matter contained in the obnoxious paper that serves as a foundation on which to build your conduct and actions concerning him? Is there a single word or hint in that or any other official document, from which you can draw any legitimate conclusion that either Lewellyn Jones or a majority of the votaries of reform have any intention or wish to "destroy itinerancy or establish a congregational system among us?" On the contrary, does not the "Mutual Rights," a periodical paper, the most important of any extant on the subject, and which has circulated almost throughout the United States, (notwithstanding the indefatigable efforts of itinerants, generally, to impede its currency and smother the light that emanates from it), I say, does not that work abound with unequivocal attestations of special attachment and regard to the itinerant plan? And will William Compton, at this time of day, fly in the face of such evidence, and assert that he has "reason to believe that the object of a majority of the reform-

ers" is what he states it to be? Oh my God, lay not this sin to his charge! But you will say you do not read the "Mutual Rights;" if so, I must tell you, sir, that you are still more inexcusable, because you neglect to improve the means of information. The old adage says, "none so blind as he that will not see." You go on to quote the latter part of my first question, and answer as follows: "I knew that he was a member of the same body with L. J., but I had paid but a superficial attention to your constitution, and therefore I did not act upon that as evidence at all," &c. Astonishing that an instrument of writing so offensive as that appears to be should have been read in your hearing, as I know it was, and subject to your perusal, and that at a time when you were seeking evidence, and knowing moreover, as you did, that several brethren had lately been expelled for having subscribed to it; I say, it is indeed astonishing that you could collect no scrap of evidence from that paper to help out the circumstantial proof you say you obtained! And yet a few weeks afterwards you thought you could see sufficient turpitude in the act of subscribing to the self same paper to expel our venerable father for that act alone, unaccompanied with any other evidence of whatever nature!

Permit me in closing my remarks on your answer to my first question, which have exceeded the limits I had set myself, to suggest that, as your mind underwent such a change, in reference to the paper alluded to, on a second reading, that, per-



haps, it would not be amiss to give it a third, and perhaps you will then abandon the second view you took of it, and resume the first.

You next quoted my second question, and were so condescending as to translate it into English for me, for which I tender you my thanks, as I have to acknowledge that I am a bad hand at translation. Indeed so ignorant was I in such things, that I did not know but that my dialect approached nearer to the English language than any other, though I was apprehensive it was not all good English. But while you are giving me the English of my second question, you enclose a short sentence, in parenthesis, as being peculiarly exceptionable, as follows: "The Methodist (which you are pleased to call the militant) Church." Now, sir, I would ask, when a man is expelled from the Methodist Church, if he is not at that moment expelled from the visible militant church also? You will take notice that I did not say that the Methodist comprised the whole of the militant church. And now, sir, why this semblance of criticism? You go on to state that my "second question was sufficiently met by your brother Howard," but thinking, I suppose, that you were about to bring me into a dilemma, you ask as follows: "Will you say that the Presbyterians because they are Calvinists, or the Baptists because they deny infant baptism and free communion, or the Protestant Episcopalians because they contend for a regular succession in the ministry, are heretics and therefore to be excluded from the king-

dom of heaven? Let your conscience answer." My conscience, sir, answers no. You go on then to suppose that all the errors of these different denominations are concentrated in one man, who is a Methodist and named L. J., a case that I believe has never existed in the Methodist Church in America, and I think never will; but I will suppose, since it will accommodate you, that the thing is possible, as we may suppose that when the sky falls we shall catch larks; and I would ask, what have you gained by my admission? For a doubt still remains on my mind whether in that case (if we are convinced that he is a member of Christ's mystical body, and a fit subject for the church triumphant) it would be right to exclude him from our communion. But as we are sometimes forgetful readers "of those things which confute our strongest arguments in favor of a beloved theory," especially if they are found in a book which we are wont to regard as almost immaculate, permit me to refer you to your book of Discipline, last edition and 90th page, and you will there read as follows: "If the accused person be found guilty, by the decision of a majority of the members before whom he is brought to trial, and the *crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory*, let the minister or preacher who has charge of the circuit expel him." Now, my dear sir, it appears to me that in order to support your beloved "theory," or appear consistent, you must turn reformer yourself, and

petition the powers that be as ardently to amend or expunge the above quotation as any of them can for the abrogation of the brandy law, the law respecting itinerant negroes, or any thing else to which they object. But, sir, to close on this point I will now make an appeal to your own reason and conscience. Do you believe it just and right to exclude a member of Christ's mystical body, and a fit subject for the kingdom of glory, from communion at the Lord's table, and from all church privileges with the Lord's children, solely on account of a difference of opinion about non-essentials? Do you not invite all the Lord's children to the Lord's table? But perhaps you will say, I invite all that are in good standing. If so, then the first question recurs, ought a difference of opinion about non-essentials to affect their standing? Oh, my God! drive these interrogatories home to his conscience. You proceed then to ask exultingly, "Is this the way that you argue?" &c., as though you had taken great spoil. I think, sir, if you will read the foregoing remarks with attention and candor, you may possibly think that your exultation was rather premature. You go on to say that "when a man subscribes to an instrument of writing, the express object of which is to 'revolutionize' the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I think it my duty, as a member of said church, to be decided in my stand against him." I have no wish, sir, to bind your conscience; for my venerable father and several of my brethren are now groaning under the

effects of will and power that have combined to fetter theirs. If, after reading the foregoing, and especially the many luminous essays that have been published in the "Mutual Rights," on the propriety and necessity of some alteration in the economy of our church; if, after obtaining all the light you can on this important subject, you still feel it to be your duty to regard your brother as a heathen man and a publican, because he prefers an equitable representative government, then, sir, I wish you to enjoy that freedom for which we plead. In closing the sentence you say, "and for this reason I have resolved to be no longer neutral in the matter." Thank you, sir: we have been waiting for years for some of our old side chieftains to break silence on this subject; and if you will come forward with your strong reasons, and combat our arguments, instead of our persons or piety, (without evidence,) we will listen or read with pleasure. You next quote my fourth and last question, and answer first by saying, "I think both;" and then proceed to give me a definition of the term *generous* contained in my question; after which you go on to display your generosity in "vindicating the church," and in "keeping nothing concealed that might injure her." But you certainly knew that my question did not have reference to the church but to the accused person. You next mention some who are "dividing our Zion against herself," and manifest a wish to expose them in all their ramifications. If, sir, you can give me any mark by which I may know them,

I will render any assistance in my power in order to detect and expose them. But from the contents of your remarks it appears to me that you have indirectly, at least, charged the reformers with this crime. Now, my dear sir, permit me to request you to ask your own conscience, in the presence of God, if it was not an uncharitable and unwarrantable insinuation? Indeed, sir, if I had been told that you thought the reformers guilty of this crime, I should have thought that you were falsely accused. You go on to declare that you think you performed "an act of justice as well as generosity," and proceed to suppose a case respecting a murder committed by A, B and C. You say they are all tried, and being found accessory to this man's death, &c. Now where is the proof that L. J. was accessory to any thing that those two other men ever said or did in their lives. And now, sir, as your case is entirely irrelevant, permit me to substitute one more applicable to the subject in hand. Suppose a murder committed in the State of Tennessee by A and B, and an inhabitant of Granville named C is arrested under a suspicion of murder. At his trial a witness comes forward and states that he saw A and B kill a man in Tennessee. The judge would no doubt ask as follows: "Witness, was C present or in any way accessory to the man's death that you know of?" The witness answers, "He was not present, and I have no reason to believe that he was at all accessory to the man's death, only that he is a man, and the murder

was committed by men, for I do not think he ever was in Tennessee." Now, sir, Ivey Harris asks again whether it was either just, generous or pertinent in the witness to name what A and B did in Tennessee, especially if he had done it with a design to impress the minds of the judge and jury unfavorably with regard to C? "The law," you say, "says that they shall die;" but L. H. asks whether it is just to name what A and B did on the trial of C? Stop, sir, L. H. did not ask whether it was just to name what A and B did on the trial of C "*after they are all tried and found accessory to the man's death.*" I will now, sir, take occasion to ask what law it is that you speak of, and by what authority it was enacted?

As you are fond of illustration, I will take the liberty to state a case, and I promise you it shall not be an irrelevant one; but I shall use different letters from yours, because I think them more significant and appropriate. Suppose I (itinerant) is found in the possession of that which is the undoubted right and property of L (local man) and L (layman); and while he is in the possession of this property he assumes the authority to enact a law punishing with death L and L and their children after them, if they should be guilty of remonstrating or "inveighing" against his authority or injustice. In some few years some of the oldest and most intelligent children of L and L are heard to express a wish that I would repeal that law and restore them their right. On hearing of this,

I despatches an officer to arrest them, and they are brought before a court that was appointed and its members nominated by I himself. Now L. H. asks who is to determine their case? Shall it be I's court or a court that is formed on the principle of justice, reason and religion; or, if you like it better, a court and a law that had been previously appointed and enacted by I, L and L in conjunction? "Transfer the idea, and the thing is explained."

You proceed to make several "plain statements," and say, first, "I think L. J. is justly expelled, yet I think that he is not so culpable as those of Harris's class, through whose influence he and others have been turned aside from the simplicity of the gospel." Worse and worse. Really, sir, it appears to me that if it is just to punish one who is inadvertently and unsuspectingly led astray in this manner, there can be no punishment inflicted in this life adequate to the crime of him who is the contriver of his seduction. But from what has he been turned aside by those emissaries of Satan? From the simplicity of the gospel. Pray, sir, in what do you make the simplicity of the gospel to consist? Does it consist in all ecclesiastical power being vested in few hands? Then, sir, we may suppose that the pope of Rome shared largely in this grace. Does it consist in the itinerancy claiming all legislative, executive and judicial power in the church, and in withholding from the locality and laity their just rights? Then, sir, you would make the gospel knawish as well as simple. The substance of your remarks is

the old tale over again, the reformers have back-slidden. But as this is judging (without evidence, as it respects a large majority of them), and not argument, I shall pass it over by saying, with an apostle, "now walkest thou not charitably." But as to your charge respecting reforming ministers, I would just ask if it might not be justly retorted? You next ask, "and will you, for the sake of non-essentials, distract the body to which you belong?" No, sir, we only wish to introduce a habit of sober and deliberate thinking. "Will you give the adversary cause to speak reproachfully of religion?" No, sir, we are laboring to take from him all occasion to speak reproachfully of religion in general, and of the Methodist Church in particular, by saying, as many have said, "we admire your doctrines and the zeal of your ministers, but we despise the government of your church, because it is despotic and aristocratical." You go on, "and arm the enemies of Christ with arguments against the truth!" God forbid! but we feel it to be our duty to combat such arguments, and furnish the church and the world with weapons with which to defend it. It seems, sir, by your following remarks, that my friendly effort to save your feelings, after I had endeavored plainly to point out the injustice of your conduct relative to L. J., is construed by you into flattery, of which, however, I was not conscious; and you appear to glory in being "equally blameworthy with those true friends of old Methodism." In vain you try, sir, to collect a tax for your present



economy by attaching the term "old" to it; for many of our present rules and regulations were born since the days of Wesley. How old, for instance, is the brandy law? And even episcopacy itself is not yet forty-five years old in the Methodist Church. And I will tell you, sir, if Moore's *Life of Wesley* is entitled to credit, it was a source of sorrow to Mr. Wesley when he heard that a *man* named *Bishop* was born in America: see Moore's *life of Wesley*, vol. 2, page 385, in a letter addressed to Mr. Asbury, dated London, September 20th, 1788. Although I know that between this letter and the account given in our Discipline, page 6, there is a manifest discrepancy. You go on to propose that "you and I pray more and talk less about non-essentials." As to praying more, with the assistance of grace I will join you. As to talking less, how does that accord with the resolution you say you have formed, "to be no longer neutral in the matter?"

I have finished the argumentative part of this address; and now, my dear brother Compton, I beseech you not to construe the pointed manner in which I have addressed you, and my honest efforts to avoid the imputation of flattery, into asperity or spleen. And as it respects your addressing me again on this subject, I wish you to consult your own feelings and inclination; and as I have endeavored to be full and explicit, I incline to the opinion that I shall not address you again on the subject, although I do not preclude myself. One request

more I have to make of you, and that is, if you write again on this subject, you will not trouble yourself to establish irrelevant points by irrelevant suppositions, but come to the point at issue between us. Otherwise, quote Paul's leaving his cloak at Troas with Carpus as a conclusive answer to all my arguments.

I add no more but a sincere prayer to Almighty God that you and I, after this life shall end, may fill some happy seat in that church where not one of the members shall feel any disposition to punish either father or son on account of any difference of opinion about non-essentials.


Yours, in the best of bonds,

IVEY HARRIS.

REV. WM. COMPTON.

The Granville Union Society had been formed in July, and ere six months had passed away seven of its members had been summoned to trial and expelled from the church of their choice, for the *crime* of subscribing to the innocent constitution of that society. At the same time no charges were brought against the other members who had signed that instrument, and were equally guilty. The principal actors in these disagreeable and deplorable scenes were the Rev. Benton Field and Rev. William Compton. They no doubt concluded that the sacrifice of seven victims would be such a victory as to annihilate the Union Society, awe into submission the advocates of reform, and eradicate

the long term of republicanism in the Methodist Episcopal Church. But in this they met with a most signal failure. There were, however, some to be found who talked loudly of their attachment to "natural rights," whilst no adverse rules were showing, but when "the tug of war" came on their principles changed with the times: they renounced the doctrines of reform, became the advocates of theocratic supremacy, sought again to float in the current of popularity, rather than oppose the pleasure and wishes of a few erring mortals, who were willing to lend it over God's heritage for a season. Such men are to be pitied. Their principles are ever governed by the rule of convenience. Hence, when they ascertain the location of power or of the majority, they are as ready when to fall into ranks. But there were many others who had espoused the principles of "natural rights," and adhered to the same from principle. These may, with becoming propriety, be called men of principle, because they were willing to stand by their principles, and if the force of circumstances made it necessary, were even willing to bear their exiled brethren company into their "Parnos." Those seven brethren had evidently suffered persecution for the sake of their opinions, apart from the doctrines of the gospel; hence, they were not forsaken by their brethren who cherished kindred sentiments, but were still received and regarded as belonging to the household of God.



## CHAPTER IV.

Reform in Tennessee.—Trial of Rev. D. B. Dorsey before the Baltimore Annual Conference.—Letter of Rev. H. B. Bascom to Mr. Dorsey.—Rev. Mr. Dorsey's reply, giving an account of his trial.—Trials and expulsions of the Rev. Dr. Jennings and others of the Baltimore Union Society by the preacher in charge, Rev. J. M. Hanson.

THE transactions that are recorded in the preceding chapter are such as seem to challenge the belief of the credulous, particularly when we bring into view the part enacted by the ministers of religion. But the pious mind is clouded with astonishment upon a recital of the fact that the administration of Rev. Benton Field was not only approved by his itinerant brethren in the ministry, but his official character was passed by the Virginia Annual Conference, to which he was amenable. That conference held its subsequent session at Petersburg, Va., in February, 1827. "The Granville Union Society of North Carolina presented to it a petition praying that seven of its members lately expelled from the M. E. Church for being members of said society be restored to their former standing. The petitioners alleged that although the charge exhibited against them was that of inveighing against the discipline, yet nothing was proved against them on the trial but their having joined the Granville Union Society. That when the preacher found he

could not substantiate his charge, he put the following question to the society: 'You that believe their being members of the Union Society will have a bad effect will rise up.' That a majority of those present were of that opinion and rose up, upon which the preacher read them out as expelled. With the petition the Granville Union Society presented a charge against the preacher for mal-administration; but the conference decided that it was not mal-administration. Thus the door is closed on our unfortunate brethren, and opened for all the reformers to be pushed out of the church." \*

Early in the year 1825 a disposition was manifested to persecute reformers in Tennessee. There were some to be found among the membership of the M. E. Church in that State who openly espoused the doctrines of "mutual rights;" but there too were to be found the opponents of such principles, holding the reins of power, and most unscrupulously willing to exercise the same, even to the expulsion of their Christian brethren who would venture to differ from them upon questions of church polity, as the following extract of a letter will show, which was published in the "Mutual Rights" for November, 1825, and written by a member of the Bedford Union Society:

"Dear Brethren,—You have already been apprised by Dr. Elgin and brother Smith that a reforming society in the Methodist Episcopal Church

\* Letter of Rev. W. Harris.

was about to be established in Bedford county, Tennessee. The society alluded to organized in May last, under the name of the 'Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Bedford county, Tennessee,' and adopted a preamble and constitution. This measure has been most intemperately opposed by the itinerant preachers, a majority of the class leaders and stewards, as well as by some of the local preachers and exhorters, as you will see in the sequel.

"The first regular attempt at raising this society was at a meeting in February last, at which time nothing decisive was done, except that all who were in favor of any alteration or amendment in any part of our Discipline agreed to have their names put on a paper to that effect, and appointed a committee to draw up a constitution, to be presented at the next meeting in May. But in April, previous to the meeting which was to take place in May, and before the committee had agreed on any plan, our presiding elder, the Rev. James Gwinn, at a quarterly meeting in an adjoining circuit, (in which there were also some reformers,) at the close of his sermon on Saturday, publicly read out the names of fourteen official members, (some of whom were local preachers,) living in different circuits, and declared that 'these brethren had put themselves out of the church, and were no longer to be considered Methodists.' This was not all, for at a Quarterly Meeting Conference in this circuit the Saturday following, the elder introduced a written

resolution, the purport of which was to declare that the brethren whose names he had read out were no longer to be viewed as Methodists. But at that time the conference did not sanction the measure. After this a momentary calm ensued, and it was fondly hoped that in this country at least men were allowed liberty of conscience, as well in matters of church polity as in civil government, without being liable to the anathemas of the church. But our hopes were vain and delusive; for as soon as the society organized in May an open war of extermination commenced. One local preacher after another was cited to trial and suspended, and the Quarterly Meeting Conference have uniformly (thus far) expelled them from the church—but appeals have been taken to the Annual Conference. Indeed they have found out a short way with the unordained local preachers and exhorters, that is, not to renew their licenses. The number of local preachers expelled, cut off or censured, are nine or ten, besides exhorters. And those in power emphatically declare that so soon as they get the trials of all the official members completed, if the common members will not abandon the 'Union Society,' these also will be turned out.

"Now that you may judge how far we ought to be considered revolvers, as we are termed, I will give you an extract of what is called the most objectionable part of our constitution, to wit: 'And that this amendment should introduce an equilibrium into said church, by admitting a representation

from the local ministers and laymen, equal to that of the itinerant ministers, into all the assemblies convened for the purpose of making laws and regulations for her government.' And to show you the sentiments of our *moderate* presiding elder on the same subject, I will give you an extract from his sermon, preached at a camp-meeting in this county on Sunday last, and taken down at the time by myself, to wit: 'That God, in his word, never designed *common members* to have any thing to do with the management of the church—that his ministers are the only judges of what is right and wrong both as it relates to spiritual matters and church government; because God has called them to the work—that even these ministers have no right to legislate about church matters, as their only guide is the Bible; but that, for their own convenience, they may make rules and regulations for the government of the societies they have raised.' Thus you see what kind of equality and freedom exists in our church in this land of liberty.

"The main motive in making this communication is to ask the counsel and advice of the Baltimore Union Society in relation to the course we ought to pursue, for, although a strong effort will be made by the reformers at our next annual Conference to reverse the decisions had against them; yet I am fearful it will not avail. In the event of my fears being realized, the only alternative then will be, either to ask forgiveness, submit to the yoke, and abandon every attempt at a redress of our



grievances, or organize another church. What would be best? We love the Methodist Church; we love her doctrines; we love her ordinances; we love the itinerating plan; and we love her ministers; but we believe God will smile upon our efforts if we are driven from the church, and thereby compelled to separate, because we have not attempted to do any thing more than the Bible and the laws of our free and happy country will justify. I contemplate the possibility of a separation with fear and trembling, and ask counsel in the sight of God."

The progress of the principles of reform has been onward from the beginning. Though the hydra-headed monster persecution had reared its hideous front in many places, and the advocates of "mutual rights" had been made to feel the oppressive hand of power, yet the friends of religious liberty still hoped that a brighter day would yet dawn upon them; that their itinerant brethren would be brought to acknowledge the "rights and privileges" of the laity and local ministry, inasmuch as many of them were known to be in favor of their claims to representation in the rule-making department of the church. Hitherto we have seen that the persecutions which had been carried on against the advocates of reform were waged by the itinerant ministry individually, and had merely received the sanction of Annual Conference. But in the beginning of the year 1827, we have the strange spectacle exhibited to us of an Annual Conference of ministers of the gospel in solemn assembly taking an active

part in these inquisitorial proceedings, as the following extract from the "Mutual Rights" for June of that year will show.

"On Wednesday the 18th of April, the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey was 'charged before the Baltimore Annual Conference with having been actively engaged in the circulation of an improper periodical work.' A confidential letter from Mr. Dorsey to a friend, recommending to his attention the Mutual Rights, as an important work on church government, was produced in evidence, and read in the conference. Mr. Dorsey acknowledged the letter to be his, but did not consider that he had violated any law by recommending the above work. After Mr. Dorsey had retired, the following resolution was offered by the Rev. Stephen G. Roszel, and adopted by the conference: 'Resolved, that Dennis B. Dorsey's character pass, upon his being admonished by the president, and promising the conference that he will desist from taking any agency in spreading or supporting any publications in opposition to our discipline or government.'

"On the following day the admonition was given in due form from the chair; but Mr. Dorsey could not be induced to make the promise required by the resolution. He objected to it as unreasonable and unjust—there being no law in the Discipline prohibiting any preacher from recommending or circulating such works as the Mutual Rights. He stated that he was willing to promise the conference to be submissive to the discipline and government of

the church, and to recommend like obedience to others, until by the legislative authority of the church some modification of the government could be effected. A promise embracing more than this he informed them he *could not* make.

“On Friday the case was again resumed, and Mr. Dorsey was pressed to make the promise required by the resolution, which he still declined, urging, as before, the injustice of the requirement. Upon which the Rev. Stephen G. Roszel made the following motion: ‘Moved, that the character of brother Dorsey pass, upon his being reprovved by the president for his contumacy in resisting the authority of the conference.’ This motion, however, did not prevail. After considerable desultory conversation on the case, the following resolution was offered by the Rev. Job Guest, and adopted by the conference: ‘Moved and seconded, that the bishops be and thereby are requested not to give Dennis B. Dorsey an appointment for the present year; and that his name be so returned on the minutes, with the reasons assigned why he has not an appointment, viz: his contumacy in regard to the authority of the conference.’ On Saturday the latter part of this motion was so far rescinded as to omit the publication of it on the printed minutes of the conference, but to retain it on the journal.

“Thus was brother Dorsey, a presbyter in the Methodist Episcopal Church, without any charge against his moral or religious character, left, by the order of the conference, without a prospect of sup-

port for himself and family, and that, too, with a constitution seriously injured in the service of the church."

Who can read the preceding narrative without his sympathies being drawn out in behalf of this wronged and misused man? The news of the action of the Baltimore Annual Conference in this case created quite a sensation throughout the entire borders of the church, and called forth just expressions of disapprobation and condemnation from the friends of moderation and equal rights in all quarters. Union Societies in different parts of the United States passed resolutions approving the stand taken by Mr. Dorsey, and censuring in strong terms the action of the Annual Conference in the premises. Liberal contributions were forwarded by the friends of reform from different quarters to Baltimore, for his relief and support, and the spirit that was manifested towards him by the friends of "mutual rights" was worthy of such men and of such a cause. Among the itinerant ranks there were many who reprobated in strong terms the unjust and iniquitous sentence thus passed upon him. Epistles of consolation were addressed to this martyr of mutual rights by several of the traveling ministers of the M. E. Church, some of which reflected severely upon the conduct of the Baltimore Annual Conference. No doubt many of them were taken by surprise, as well as they knew men, when they learned of the unjust treatment meted out to Mr. Dorsey by the supporters of Episcopal authority.

Innocence and truth may suffer, but among the virtuous and good they never fail to find friends in the hour of trial. Even so in the case of this Christian minister; there were men who boldly came forth to sustain him in the face of fearful ecclesiastical authority, and denounced in unmeasured terms the treatment he had received at the hands of the conference. The writer begs leave to introduce here a letter addressed to the Rev. D. B. Dorsey by the Rev. H. B. Bascom, and published in the Mutual Rights for May, 1827, inasmuch as Dr. Bascom is ranked among the ablest exponents of Methodist Episcopacy by the membership of that communion, and his claims have been supported by some for the episcopal office.

APRIL 27, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR :

Not knowing you *personally*, nor the *place* of your residence, I ask the privilege of addressing you through the medium of the Mutual Rights, for *approving* and *recommending* of which you now stand *suspended* as a Methodist traveling preacher! The Baltimore Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church—with three or more bishops present to direct and shape its measures—have, by a solemn resolution, after several days' deliberation, *officially* decided that a presbyter in the church of God deserves *punishment* and *disgrace*, because he adopts opinions and sentiments, on the subject of church government, which are received and acted upon by a large majority of Protestant Christians

throughout the various divisions of the religious world! I cannot pause, my brother, to write the many denunciations that common sense, throughout an outraged community, will pronounce upon this overbearing act of abandoned tyranny! But I hasten to inquire why were *you* selected as the *victim*, the *sole* victim, when it was in proof before them that others were in the same condemnation! Why did not "my lord of Canterbury" who "rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm" among you, and by whom even bishops are tithed at will, together with the active and zealous doctor, the principal officer in his "star chamber," select a goodly number of victims, and offer an *appalling* hecatomb at once! Was it because heaven had deprived you of health? Was it because you were remote from home and friends? Was it because, like your Master, you were poor, and with the humble sharer of fortunes "had scarcely where to lay your head?" Did they wish, by increasing your *mental* inquietude, to strengthen the desolation *without*, and so send you to a premature grave? Or was it intended by the *horror* of the example made of you, to say to other reformers, "If *you* have the *word*, *we* have the sword!" I cannot refrain from asking where *three* or *four* members of the Baltimore Conference were during this *labored* deed of *hard-earned* infamy? Did they sit by in inglorious silence? But, my brother, be not discouraged, recollect that the great father of us all, as Methodists, was by a similar body and in the *same* city forty years ago, declared

ownership of name or place in that communion, in the midst of which you have found yourself unceremoniously degraded. When Mr. Wesley was informed of this, he declared, in a letter now in my possession, that the American Union had "no more connection with him." But I trust you will not be decuded in opinion by your blinded and prejudiced brethren. "Yet a little while," and this stupid ~~English~~ zeal, will be ended in the humiliation and disgrace of your persecutors: public indignation will chastise their proud pretensions to ~~unjust~~ dominion over the rights and consciences of those who have too much intelligence and too much candor to think and act by their prescription! To conclude, my dear sir, I beg you to accept the best wishes of a stranger, "fair and in the day of evil;" theictory overthrow you have sustained, for the rights of conscience, will make strangers your friends: on hearing of the treatment you and others received at the Baltimore Conference, ten or twelve persons within my charge have declared for reform, and are ready to aid you with their influence and purses. Wishing the speedy restoration of your health, and that you may live to see the cause of religious oppression banished from the church and the world,

I remain yours in the kingdom and patience of Jesus.

VINDEX.

REV. D. B. DORSEY.

The preceding letter from the pen of Dr. Bascom breathes forth the sentiments of a genuine

reformer. And although at the time a traveling minister himself in the Methodist connexion, yet he could venture to denounce the treatment received by the Rev. Mr. Dorsey at the hands of the Annual Conference, and reflect most severely upon the injustice of such treatment. Nor did the doctor stop at this; but followed it up by a second, in vindication of the positions taken in the first, which is, if possible, the more severe of the two; the last mentioned letter is to be found published in the *Mutual Rights* for August.

The honest inquirer after truth might be reasonably led to ask the question, was not Dr. Bascom called to account and dealt with, for the freedom and boldness of his reflections upon the action of the Baltimore Annual Conference in the case of Mr. Dorsey? The answer is *no*. "The powers that be" in the M. E. Church, at that time, seem to have had different methods of dealing with different men. Rev. D. B. Dorsey circulated or recommended the *Mutual Rights*; for this he was proscribed by the Annual Conference. Rev. H. B. Bascom, D. D., wrote and published in that same work, the *Mutual Rights*, such strictures as the preceding, upon and against a conference of Methodist ministers, with three bishops at their head, and no charges are brought against him. And, unless history tells a dubious tale, it was not long after these things took place that the doctor was appointed to a professorship in one of the western colleges under the patronage and control of the M. E.



Church,\* since which time his pen has ceased to write such strictures. In order that the reader may have a full view of all the points in the case of Rev. Mr. Dorsey, the writer will subjoin his reply to Rev. H. B. Bascom.

BALTIMORE, MAY 15, 1827.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :

I have had the pleasure of reading your affectionate communication, addressed to me through the medium of the Mutual Rights, and now enjoy the pleasure of returning you, through the same medium, my grateful acknowledgments for the solicitude you evince on my behalf. In the meantime I am not unmindful of the great principles on which this matter is predicated, of which I presume you are an advocate. As you put several interrogatories relative to the case, for your personal information I will give you a glance at the whole affair. I am the more inclined to this than to entire silence, under existing circumstances, for two reasons. The first regards the reputation of our conference, which is as liable to be tarnished as my own; and the second is grounded on the special regard which I must necessarily feel for my character, as a Christian and a minister of the gospel. This brief history shall be given from my best recollections, and the least exceptionable means of information. If there should be any apparent mis-statement, I hope no brother will attribute it to design; and that if any one be

\* See History of the M. E. Church by N. Bangs.

prepared to correct it, he will do so through this *public* medium, before he undertakes to correct or criminate in a *private manner*.

Some time last February, I wrote a few lines to a friend, Mr. Hugh Sharp, in which I gave him information "of a work on church government publishing in Baltimore, by a committee of Methodist preachers and members, exposing to open view some of the errors in our government and administration." I also informed him that the work "was a very satisfactory one, well worth his attention;" that I had "taken it more than eighteen months, and was well pleased with it;" that it contained so many pages, and came at so much per year; that several in that part took it and were well pleased with it; and finally requested him to let me know immediately if he desired to have the work, and to inquire of a brother, whom I named, whether *he* would take it also. In conclusion, I remarked to him, "you need not mention this to any other person, if you please." But when Mr. Robert Minshall, the preacher in charge of Huntingdon circuit came round, my friend Sharp betrayed me, by giving him my letter to read. Mr. Minshall then, according to his own telling in conference, asked him for a copy of the letter, to which he replied that he might have the *original*, as it was of no use to him. About this time there was a letter written by Mr. Minshall to Mr. David Steele, giving him information that I was actively engaged in circulating the Mutual Rights, and probably censuring me for such

conduct. This information was communicated to Mr. John Davis, who in his turn reported it again, until finally, it was brought before the late Annual Conference, first in the form of an *objection*, and then as a *charge*. After the commencement of the conference, I had an interview with Mr. Davis, who gave me an assurance that, as I would give him no satisfaction in his interrogatives, he could not *pass over* it in the examination of my character. Accordingly, when my name was called, in the examination of characters, Mr. S. G. Roszel arose and made some *objections*, stating, as I was informed by members of conference, that I was too unwell to be present, that I had been away from my circuit the past year, under the *pretence* of being *afflicted*, but had been travelling extensively, circulating a work derogatory to the interests of the church. My case was then postponed until I could be present.

The following or second day after, I was present, when my name was called, and the inquiry instituted, whether there was any thing against my character. Certain members of the conference replied that there *was*, but the brother who had made the objection was absent. Mr. Roszel, being sent *for*, came in and stated his objection, on the ground above mentioned. This led to reference for information, and Messrs. Steele and Minshall were referred to as informants. My letter was now produced by Mr. Minshall, who stated how he obtained it, and intimated that it had now accidentally come in place, as he thought, when he obtained it, might

some time be the case. The letter was then read, and the president, Mr. Soule, remarked that if I had any thing to say in reply, I was now at liberty to speak for myself. As I saw no *formal* charge, I had nothing to say, only to acknowledge the letter read to be my own production. I then retired, and after considerable deliberation on the subject, the case was decided. Some brother, in passing out of the conference, remarked to me that I could now go in, which left me under the impression that my character had passed. I then went in and remained until conference adjourned, but heard no official announcement of the decision until next day. I learned however, in the meantime, the nature of the decision, in part, but could find no one to give it to me in full.

The next morning, when the journal of the preceding day was read, there was a formal charge recorded, which was "*for having been actively engaged in the circulation of an improper periodical work.*" The president then announced to me from the chair that the decision of the conference in my case was, "that my character should pass, upon my being admonished by the president, and promising the conference that I would desist from taking any agency in spreading or supporting any publication in opposition to our discipline or government." The admonition was then given from the chair, after I had signified my disposition to submit to it, for the sake of brethren's consciences. I was then required to give a pledge

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that I would comply with the latter part of the resolution, which I *refused* to do, while the resolution remained in its unqualified form. I then replied to all the important items of the admonition, and gave my reasons for not complying with the latter part of the resolution. The following is the substance :

Mr. President,—With you I admit the importance of clearly ascertaining that we have *found* the truth before we undertake to *communicate* it; and that when we do communicate it, we ought to be careful to cultivate the spirit of Christianity, lest it be attended with greater injury than good to our fellow men. These considerations have governed me throughout; and God forbid I should ever depart from them! As it regards the allusion to my promises, before I received ordination, to be obedient to my superiors, and not to “mend our rules, but keep them,” I reply that I regret exceedingly that when I made such promises I was not better qualified to judge of our discipline and government. I was young, inexperienced and uninformed. I perceived no errors in either of these. But, sir, if I *now* had to pass that examination, I should certainly be strict in *qualifying* my promises, as I do believe there are *rules of discipline*, as well as practices in our *administration*, which ought to be modified.

I do, sir, as firmly and fully believe in our *doctrines*, generally, as any brother; and have endeavored, since I became a member of our church, to

obey them ; nor do I now feel any abatement of my purpose to persevere in this path of duty to the end, by the grace of God assisting me. I have uniformly recommended our *Discipline* to others, as well as labored to conform to its mandates myself ; and in this course, too, I feel inclined to persevere until some better modification of them shall be introduced by the proper authority of the church, or until they be repealed. And as to the grand *fundamentals* of our *government*, (meaning the itinerant operations,) no member of this conference feels more disposed to support them than I do. But, sir, believing as I do that there are some of the minutiae of our discipline and government which could be modified to advantage, I wish to enjoy the privilege of examining the subject by reading ecclesiastical history, the "Mutual Rights," or any thing else which will afford me the necessary information. And when I am fully convinced that I have obtained a knowledge of the truth, I desire the privilege of *communicating* it in the best possible manner to the church and the world, either verbally or otherwise. And although I should rejoice to have the sanction of this conference in so doing, yet if it *cannot* be obtained, I must beg the privilege of pursuing the course which my judgment and conscience dictate.

You admit that the *preachers* have a right to *read* and *examine* the "Mutual Rights," or any thing else they please. And is it not admitted that they have the same right to communicate to *others* what they

learn? Are we to retain our information, and neither speak nor write about it? No, sir, I cannot suffer any man or body of men to trammel my rational faculties in their search for truth; nor to restrain them from promulgating it when obtained; and I now reserve to myself the entire privilege of doing so, either verbally or in any other manner I judge most expedient.

I have read the "Mutual Rights," sir, for myself, and think highly of the work, and recommend it to every member of this conference. The *bishops themselves* read it, the *preachers* read it, the *book agents* read it, and exchange the "Methodist Magazine" for it; and will any one say that the *people* have no right to read it? Without an act of reason, my intelligence itself, on the first blush of the subject, forces this language upon me, if *bishops, preachers* and *book agents* read this book with impunity, then all the *members* of our church ought to enjoy the same privilege. But I must come to the conclusion and application of this argument. If the members have as good a right to read the "Mutual Rights" as the ministry, (which all must admit, or else deny that they are free,) and if the ministers *undoubtedly* have this right, as has been admitted on this floor by bishops and others, then there is no argument to set aside the consequence, that it is the right of any preacher to *recommend* the work to the people, if he judge it would be profitable to them. And every attempt to inflict punishment on a preacher for recommending it to the people is an absolute,

though indirect, declaration that they are *not* at liberty to read and examine for themselves. If it be a preacher's *right*, how can you punish me for so doing? Yet I have been punished with an *admonition* for *recommending* the "Mutual Rights" to one or two members, for this is all the proof you had against me.

After this I retired, and the sense of the conference was taken whether my reply was satisfactory, and the vote was given in the negative. I was again called in and interrogated on the subject, but replied as before, in *my own* language, qualifying my promises, and yielding *so far* as I could without sacrificing the clearest dictates of my judgment and conscience. I *again* retired, and, as I was informed, the question, "whether my character pass," was again put to the conference, and answered by a vote in the negative. It was then "moved that the case be postponed till to-morrow."

The next day the case was again resumed, and I was once more interrogated. I replied in substance as follows:

Mr. President,—Upon a candid re-examination of the subject, I am prepared to reiterate the remarks which I offered yesterday, relative to my disposition to render a respectful obedience to our discipline and government. But I request the conference, if they please, to favor me with the *rule of discipline* on which I have been *charged, tried and punished*, that I may be better prepared to conclude how to shape my course. (No law was given.) If



there *be* any rule, and you have proceeded according to it, then I am subject to no *further* penalty, unless I can be punished twice for the same offence.

It has just now been suggested to me by a brother at my left hand that there is a law of the General Conference, passed at their last session, requiring our preachers not to become agents for other book-sellers, &c. Now, supposing this law to apply to the case in hand, (which we believe it will not,) I knew nothing about its existence until half an hour ago; and how then could I *keep* or *break* it? *It is not in our Discipline.* A law must be promulgated before it can be in force; for "where there is no *law*" there can be "no *transgression.*" How then can I be punished for the transgression of *that* law? I feel myself as much bound as any member of this conference to keep the laws of the General Conference, until they shall be amended or repealed. When I violate any one of those laws I am amenable at this tribunal, and, if found guilty, subject to punishment, and am willing to submit to it. But I cannot be punished *now* for an offence which I *may* or *may not* commit hereafter, without a violation of justice. Moreover, it has been suggested by the president that "an Annual Conference has authority to make rules and regulations for its own members." Admitted. *Rules* and *regulations* are not *laws* to regulate *moral conduct*, I presume. This conference is now sitting in a legislative or executive capacity. If the former, then not the latter;

and if the latter, not the former. If you are sitting in an executive capacity, how can you enact laws for yourselves to execute? if in a legislative capacity, how can you execute your own laws? unless you prove that these two powers should be united in one body, which would *astonish* my understanding, and prove a monstrous anomaly in ecclesiastical government in this country.

But if this conference had the power both to enact laws for the regulation of the moral characters of its members, and to execute such laws when enacted, surely none would argue that you had authority to punish one of your members for a breach of a law *before* it is *broken* or even *enacted*! And when was the law enacted which prohibits any of your body from recommending the "Mutual Rights?" the supposed offence for which I have suffered the punishment of an admonition.

I might easily say much more on the subject, for it is one of the deepest moment to me; but suffer me to close my remarks by referring brethren to the many hard things which some of them have said on this floor; and also to what some of them have written and published in opposition to certain parts of our discipline and government; and let me request them to refer to those things when they shall give their vote in this case.

I now retired again, and Mr. Roszel offered the following motion: "*That the character of brother Dorsey pass, upon his being reprovved by the president for his contumacy in resisting the authority of the conference.*"

This motion did not prevail. The following motion was then offered by Mr. Job Guest, but written, as the secretary says, by Mr. F. S. Evans: "Moved and seconded, that the bishops be and hereby are requested not to give Dennis B. Dorsey an appointment for the present year, and that his name be so returned on the minutes, with the reasons assigned why he has not an appointment, viz: his contumacy in regard to the conference." This motion was divided, and the first and second parts adopted separately. The resolution being read to me, when called in, I requested a transcript from the journal of all the proceedings in the case; and signified a probability of my appealing to the General Conference against their decision. My request was laid over, however, till the next day.

When the case was called up on the following day, on motion of Mr. Joshua Wells, it was resolved, that the last resolution passed on yesterday, relative to the return of the name on the minutes, be amended, and "that the words, 'with the reasons assigned why he has not an appointment, viz: his contumacy in regard to the authority of the conference,' be retained on the journal, but not published on the minutes." This motion was adopted. The same day, as I could not be present on account of bodily indisposition, I wrote to the conference, informing them of my determination to appeal to the General Conference, and requested them to pass a resolution that this appeal be inserted in the minutes along with their former resolution. In that letter

I renewed my request for a transcript from the journals. Mr. Robert Cadden then moved that my "request be not granted." The secretary, Mr. Waugh, and others, made some remarks on the impropriety of my obtaining such a document, without some restraint not to publish it until the General Conference. This motion was lost. After this, it was, on motion of Mr. Roszel, "*resolved that*" my "*request be granted.*"

Thus, dear sir, you have an outline of this afflictive and protracted trial; and you are now left to form your own opinion concerning the nature and grounds of the charge—the manner in which it was introduced—the proofs by which it was sustained—the decisions of the conference in the case—and my merit or demerit of the penalties inflicted. Soliciting an interest in your petitions to the God of all grace, that I may have that love which "endureth all things," and "thinketh no evil," I subscribe myself, dear brother, your fellow laborer in the cause of religious liberty and in the ministry of reconciliation;

DENNIS B. DORSEY.

TO VINDEX.

The treatment received by Mr. Dorsey at the hands of the Baltimore Annual Conference, although it was an act unlooked for by the friends of reform, yet did not dampen the ardor of the true friends of mutual rights. They saw the storm was gathering, and they were nerved for the contest.

The part which the Baltimore Union Society took in making public, through the "Mutual Rights," the facts in Mr. Dorsey's case, and the expression of their opinion on the conduct of the Baltimore Annual Conference, brought down upon them the displeasure of its ministers.

■ "The Rev. James M. Hanson and Beverly Waugh, preachers in charge of the City and Point Stations, immediately excluded fourteen local preachers, who were reformers residing in Baltimore, from all the Methodist pulpits in this city. Several of the proscribed and persecuted brethren were formerly traveling preachers; most of them had been preachers from fifteen to thirty years; and all of them had contributed to the support of the itinerant ministry, and towards the building of those very houses of worship in which they were now considered unworthy to officiate. The private members were also made to feel the displeasure of men in power in various ways. A brother, Mr. John Gephart, whose religious character stood fair, and who was recommended by his leader as a suitable person to be admitted into full membership in the Methodist Church, was rejected by Mr. Hanson *because he was a member of the Baltimore Union Society*. It was now very evident, from these facts, and from the threats thrown out by anti-reformers, that a storm of persecution was gathering over the heads of the members of the Union Society. They were, however, not dismayed, but calmly awaited the crisis, trusting in the protection of Almighty God, and resting

their cause on the sure foundation of truth and righteousness.

“Measures were now taken to expel the principal members of the Baltimore Union Society, in consequence of their having exposed the unjustifiable conduct of the Annual Conference.

“A secret meeting of anti-reformers was convened in July at a school-room in this city; several traveling preachers were present, and a *plan* was adopted to effect the expulsion of the proscribed members. A committee of seven anti-reformers were appointed, who with the assistance of the preacher in charge, Rev. James M. Hanson, were to effect this desirable object. The writer had an interview with the principal member of the committee a day or two after their appointment, and requested some information relative to their instructions. He replied, ‘I will give you the information you desire very cheerfully, and in a few words. You and your friends are members of the Union Society, and say you will not leave it. You publish the Mutual Rights, and say you will not discontinue that publication. You also say you will not *withdraw* from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Now we are reduced to one of two alternatives; either to let you remain members of the church, and let you go on peacefully publishing the Mutual Rights, by which you agitate the church, or to expel you. We have come to the *determination* to take the *latter* alternative and **EXPEL** you. It is therefore made the duty of our committee to

examine the 'Mutual Rights,' and if we find any thing in that work which is a violation of the Discipline, we are authorized to bring charges and have you expelled.'

"Here was a frank avowal of the intentions of the anti-reformers. 1. They had determined to expel the leading reformers in Baltimore, because they were members of the Union Society. 2. Because they would *continue to investigate* the principles of church government. 3. Because they *would not withdraw* from the church. 4. That some *pretext* was to be sought by which to justify their excommunication. 5. The Mutual Rights were to be 'examined' in order to find some real or *pretended* accusation by which these *holy men of God* might effect the expulsion of their brethren and fathers.

"Whilst the prosecuting committee were engaged in examining the 'Mutual Rights' and preparing charges, another part of the *plan* was developed. A meeting of all the male members belonging to the two stations, exclusive of reformers, was called on the 7th of August, in the little old Baptist meeting house on Pitt street. At that meeting a resolution was passed approving of the conduct of the conference in Mr. Dorsey's case; and an 'address,' which had been previously prepared by a deserter from the ranks of reform, was read, and ordered to be published, in which the members of the Union Society, and other reformers, were denounced as 'enemies to Methodism,' &c. One of them in particular was named, and assailed in the most

intemperate, unchristian and abusive language. The conduct of the preachers in charge, who had excluded the fourteen preachers from the pulpits, was also approved and sanctioned by the meeting. The obvious and immediate design of this meeting was to prepare the people to witness the *excommunication* of their friends and relatives, without those feelings of abhorrence and indignation which flagrant acts of injustice and cruelty were calculated to inspire in the bosom of every pious man and woman in the city.

“By the first of September Mr. Hanson was ready with his select committees of trial; one to suspend the preachers, and the other to condemn the laymen. There were nine persons on the two committees, three preachers and six laymen, all of whom had assisted to *appoint* the members of the prosecuting committee, at the meeting held in the school room; and had *prejudged* and *condemned* the members of the Union Society at the meeting held in the little Baptist church above referred to on the 7th of August. Some of them had publicly declared that ‘if they had the power they would expel every member of the Union Society from the church.’ Yet these men were selected by Mr. Hanson to act as jurors to condemn, that he might expel the members of the Union Society, and were retained by him on the trials, notwithstanding they were repeatedly objected to on these very accounts.”\*

Such were the preparations made in Baltimore by the opposers of reform, and such were the men

\* See History of the M. P. Church by Rev. James R. Williams, pp. 166—69.



before whom the friends of mutual rights were to be brought forth and tried in the church of God for their opinions upon church polity. After reading the preceding graphic description, given by one who was of the number doomed to martyrdom, the conclusion is irresistibly forced upon us, that the Rev. Mr. Hanson and his compeers in the work of proscription fondly looked forward to no other issue than that which they finally obtained, viz: the expulsion from the church of the Redeemer of those faithful ministers and members for the onerous sin of differing with *them* in opinion upon the subject of church polity.

Early in September the arrangements appear to have been completed, and Mr. Hanson entered vigorously upon the campaign of his unholy crusade. The following notice was sent to each of the accused. The subjoined is a copy of the one sent to Dr. S. K. Jennings.

BALTIMORE, SEPTEMBER 8, 1827.

REV. SIR,—You are hereby informed that charges have been preferred against you by the following persons, J. Rogers, S. Hardin, J. Berry, I. N. Toy, A. Yearly, G. Earnest and F. Israel.

As it is desirable for the satisfaction of all who feel an interest in the matter that a hearing should be had as soon as practicable, it is hoped that Tuesday evening next, at 7 o'clock, will suit your convenience. Yours respectfully,

JAMES M. HANSON.

REV. DR. S. K. JENNINGS.

To the foregoing note the following reply was returned:

I have also to say to you that the nature of my defence will make it imperiously necessary for me to correspond with the several writers, for the publication of whose papers, as one of the editors of a periodical work, I am called to give an account. This circumstance, together with other and very important parts of my intended defence, will necessarily require a good deal of time. A proper sense of justice on the part of the executive, therefore, will certainly protect me against the violence of being urged to too hasty a hearing.

I am, &c.

S. K. JENNINGS.

REV. J. M. HANSON.

Dr. Jennings was a member of the Baltimore Union Society, and a member of the editorial committee, and as a matter of course was deemed by Mr. Hanson a friend and patron of the Mutual Rights—upon this the charges and specifications against him were all based, and in order to his defence, it was important in his case that he should have some correspondence with the writers of those articles in the Mutual Rights, which were regarded so objectionable by the men in power. But this boon was denied him. Hear Mr. Hanson in reply.

“I am no less astonished that you should think it all-important to your intended defence, to have a correspondence with the writers of those pieces which the brethren above alluded to have desig-

nated. The sentiments and expressions which are deemed exceptionable have been published to the world and speak for themselves. With the writers for the "Mutual Rights," scattered as they are over the continent, the charges in question have no immediate concern; nor is it easy to see how these writers are to render you any assistance. They can furnish no testimony—they can undo nothing that you, as a member of the editorial committee may have done; and without designing to flatter, I may be permitted to say they can place the subject in question in no light in which it has not appeared to your own mind; seeing that it has been with you a subject of close and deep deliberation for several years. Under these impressions, and desirous, for the good of all concerned, to bring the matter to as speedy an issue as is consistent with a proper sense of justice, it is deemed altogether unadvisable to fix upon any period for investigation beyond Monday 17th, at 7 o'clock P. M. I am, &c.

JAMES M. HANSON.

REV. DR. S. K. JENNINGS.

P. S. Should you prefer any evening prior to the time above mentioned, be good enough to let us know.

J. M. H.

Accordingly on the 17th of September, 1827, the trial of Dr. Jennings came on. Rev. James M. Hanson in the chair. Rev. Samuel Williams, John W. Harris and Thomas Basford, committee.

Mr. Israel, on the part of the prosecution, opened the case as follows:

I have nothing personal against Dr. Jennings, I have the highest regard and personal esteem for him. I regret that this course was unavoidable. We had no other alternative. We were driven to this course. We have been told by the members of the Union Society that they must have lay delegation. They say, also, they will never withdraw from the church. Lay delegation we believe is not practicable or expedient. With these views we never can agree; we are as distant as the poles. The Mutual Rights have produced wranglings, disputations and division. Are there not two parties? Every religious community has a right to form its own discipline, and its members are not at liberty to disturb it. While they remain members of the church, they have no right to form and be members of the Union Society. We claim what we conceive to be a right of ours, and we ought to be left in the peaceable enjoyment of our rights.

The rules which we think have been violated are to be found on pages 78 and 91 of the Discipline, as designated in the charges and specifications upon which this trial is founded; and we refer to the Mutual Rights in extenso in proof of the charges. But more particularly to the references which are appended to the specifications.

#### CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel K. Jennings is charged with endeavoring to sow dissensions in the society or church in this station or city, known by the

name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and with the violation of that general rule of the Discipline of the said church or society which prohibits its members from doing harm, and requires them to avoid evil of every kind; and especially with violating that clause of said general rule which prohibits speaking evil of ministers.

Specification 1st. Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, while a member and a local preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, did heretofore attach himself to and become a member of the society called the Union Society of the city of Baltimore; which Union Society is in opposition to the Discipline, in whole or in part, of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid.

Specification 2d. Because of the said Samuel K. Jennings, as a member of said Union Society, directly or indirectly, either by pecuniary contributions or his personal influence, aiding, abetting, co-operating or assisting in the publication and circulation of a work called "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," printed under the direction of an editorial committee, (of which the said S. K. Jennings is or lately was one,) appointed by, or who are members of the Union Society aforesaid, which work or publication, called "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church" contains (among other things) much that inveighs against the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, in whole or in part,

and is in direct opposition thereto; and that is abusive or speaks evil of a part, if not of most of the ministers of that church. The general tendency of which work or publication has been to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of said church in this city or station.

Specification 3d. Because the said Samuel K. Jennings, as a member of the Union Society aforesaid, did devise, request, or recommend, the publication of a pamphlet entitled "The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," written by the Rev. Alexander McCaine, in which various declarations and assertions are made without proper proof or just foundation, calculated to disgrace and bring reproach upon the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, its ministers and members; and which declarations and assertions are well calculated to produce, increase, and heighten the disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union alluded to in the 2d specification.

For proof of which, the publication entitled "The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church" is referred to, and particularly,

No. 1, page 31, Constitution of the Union Society of Baltimore.

" 7, " 261, Essays on church property, Nos. 1 & 2, by Rev. N. Snethen.

" 25, " 26, Joseph Walker's letter, Alabama.

" 27, " 53, Luther on Representation.

" 29, " 100, Timothy's Address to Junior Bishop.

" 30, " 147, Dissenter.

No. 32, page 199, Rev. A. Shinn's Appeal.

" 33, " 214, Granville Union Society.

" 34, " 270, Vindex.

Sovereignty of Methodism in the south.

" " " 248, Address of N. Snethen.

" 35, " 277, Union Society on D. B. Dorsey's case.

" 36, " 301, Address.

" " " 300, Neale.

" " " 322, Centreville proceedings.

And also the said pamphlet, entitled "The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, with such other documentary or oral proof as the undersigned may deem expedient to exhibit or produce.

Signed George Earnest, Jacob Rogers, Samuel Harden, Isaac N. Toy, Alexander Yearly, Fielder Israel and John Berry.

Baltimore, September 7, 1827.

Doctor Jennings in the first place made a formal protest against the competency of the court which Mr. Hanson convened, upon the grounds of its want of jurisdiction in the case; that the charges and specifications upon which he was arraigned constituted a case entirely new; that, in despite of all sophistry, it would be so considered by impartial judges. He objected both to the competency and the right of the tribunal to try the questions involved in the case, and declared that he would "consider it an executive usurpation of *expost facto* legislative authority." But Mr. Hanson made known his determination to proceed.

The doctor now protested against the proceedings upon the grounds of the impossibility of a fair

and disinterested trial—that sentence was already pronounced by the men who were to sit in judgment. That his prosecutors had referred almost exclusively to papers published in the “Mutual Rights,” likewise to “The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy,” written by Rev. A. McCaine. For proof of the true position of the men who were to sit as his judges, he referred to a pamphlet, whose manuscript, written by Dr. Bond, and the rest of that committee, had the sanction and vote of the meeting at the corner of Pitt and Front streets, a meeting of the old side brethren, when and where these three brethren of the committee acted and voted with them as they now admit.” That by that vote they had virtually condemned and placed their seal of disapprobation both upon the “Mutual Rights” and the “History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy.” That, with these evidences before him, there was an impossibility of this committee being able to give an impartial hearing in the case.

But Mr. Hanson decided that that vote which they had given did not disqualify them for acting on the committee.

Dr. Jennings then entered his third protest, in which he objected to the whole of the proceedings as being illegal, and totally at variance with the usages and spirit of Methodism, in which he took very general grounds.

But to all human appearances the die had been cast, for the chairman overruled all objections; the



trial proceeded—the doctor was pronounced guilty of the specifications, and suspended from the exercise of his ministerial functions.

From an attentive perusal of the specifications alleged against Dr. Jennings, there appears to be an entire absence of any thing bearing a semblance of immorality. If he had become a member of the Union Society, he violated no rule of discipline in so doing. If he had contributed either Directly or indirectly to the support of the "Mutual Rights," he violated no rule or obligation. That periodical had for its object the welfare of the Methodist Episcopal Church. If he had advised, recommended or requested the publication of "The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," written by Rev. A. McCaine, that is a work which exhibits much learning, deep research, able arguments; and sets forth truth in so clear and masterly a manner that all the arguments and sophistry of the votaries of Methodist Episcopacy disappear before it like the vapors before the midday sun; and it is a work which any may read to advantage and profit. But this third and last specification has been pronounced by history to be "notoriously untrue."

We have presented before the reader the charges alleged and the measures adopted by the Rev. Mr. Hanson in the trial of Dr. Jennings, inasmuch as they are nearly similar or amount to the same as those alleged against the other reformers of Baltimore who were brought to trial.

Mr. Hanson proceeded in his work with a zeal

that might challenge that of Archbishop Laud in the "Star Chamber," for in a few days eleven ministers and twenty-two laymen were expelled from the communion of the church. "The Rev. A. McCaine was tried separately, in his absence, by a committee selected by Mr. Hanson, composed of three of the *most illiterate* local preachers, perhaps, in the state of Maryland, and suspended. The preachers carried up their cases to the District Conference that sat on the 26th December, 1827, which was their proper court of trial. Here they expected to have justice done them, as a majority of the conference were reformers. But on the morning of the second day, after holding a caucus the preceding evening, the presiding elder, with a *minority* of the conference and the votes of nine colored men, *who were not entitled to a vote*, DISSOLVED the District Conference, and ordered the preachers to appear at the Quarterly Conference and stand their trials. Indignant at this unexpected *act of injustice*, the preachers determined not to appear before the Quarterly Conference, but to appeal to the approaching Annual Conference against the *arbitrary* and *illegal* proceedings of the presiding elder. In the meantime the Quarterly Conference expelled them all."\*

The following extract from the "Mutual Rights," will exhibit a concise view of the course pursued by the parties during the "reign of terror."

\*See History of the M. P. Church by Rev. J. R. Williams, pp. 192—93.

“The men in power here are going on calling to their bar the members of the Union Society, to answer to the charges and specifications which they have contrived to get up. Sometimes two are tried in one day; and we are in a fair way to afford them ample employment. Since they began to summon us we have admitted more new members than they have been able to try. The world can now understand them; their determination is, that the only condition of fellowship with the Methodist Episcopal Church shall be unqualified and silent submission. They are determined to put down the Union Societies and mutual rights. These institutions have too much influence over the people, they talk too much about liberty for the power party, who are determined, it would seem, to prevent a representation, if they lose half of the members. They have removed all the reforming class-leaders; and so by the expulsion of the members of the Union Society, and the retirement of members who will be disgusted by such doings, there will be great mischief done.”

The local preachers being notified by the presiding elder of the Baltimore District, Rev. Mr. Frye, of his intention to bring before the Quarterly Conference of the city station the charges and specifications for which they had been suspended, made a formal protest against the illegality of such a step being taken; alleging, as the grounds of their protest, that he had dissolved the District Conference, (before which alone their case could have been

legally considered,) by counting the votes of colored men, said to be without precedent in the State of Maryland.

A memorial was also sent up, by all who were expelled in Baltimore, to the Baltimore Annual Conference, which assembled in Carlisle, in April, 1828. But that conference not only confirmed the act of Messrs. Hanson & Co. in the expulsion of the memorialists, but likewise expelled the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey and the Rev. Wm. C. Pool, for charges of a similar nature.

The brethren that were thus prosecuted and expelled from the M. E. Church in Baltimore, on account of their reform principles, were among the oldest, most exemplary and faithful supporters of the worship and doctrines of that communion. We subjoin a list showing the number of years each one had been a member of the church.

	YEARS.		YEARS.
John Chappell,	46	Rev. Luther J. Cox,	19
Rev. D. E. Reese,	33	Joseph R. Forman,	19
Thomas Jarrett,	32	Rev. John S. Reese,	17
Rev. Dr. S. K. Jennings,	30	Thomas Mummey,	16
Samuel Jarrett,	30	Rev. Thomas McCormick,	16
Rev. James R. Williams,	27	Thomas Patterson,	16
“ John Valiant,	27	John Paul,	15
“ William Kesley,	26	George Northerman,	15
Lambert Thomas,	26	Samuel Guest,	14
William K. Boyle,	25	J. H. W. Hawkins,	12
Arthur Emerson,	25	Samuel Thompson,	12
John Kennard,	23	Thomas Parsons,	12
Samuel Krebs,	22	Rev. R. T. Boyd,	11
John J. Harrod,	20	John P. Howard,	10
Rev. John C. French,	20	Ebenezer Strahan,	8
Wesley Starr,	20	Levi R. Reese,	4

It would appear from the preceding schedule that neither office, nor station, nor piety, nor zeal, nor talents, nor services, nor usefulness, nor age could screen a member of the church from expulsion, if he was brought before Mr. Hanson's committee for the *crime* of being a member of the Union Society. And it no doubt will astonish the pious reader to learn that such events were enacted in the M. E. Church, in these United States, as late as the year 1827.

## CHAPTER V.

Association of the expelled reformers in Baltimore.—Declaration set forth, and withdrawal of ladies in the city.—General Convention of reformers in Baltimore in 1827.—Schedule of Union Societies.—Resolutions of Roanoke Union Society.—Letter of Rev. William Compton to that body.—Review of the letter by Committee of Correspondence.

THE expelled brethren, in being thus divested of church fellowship, united themselves together under the following instrument of association, in order to secure to themselves and friends Christian communion :

## COPY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Under which the expelled members and ministers in Baltimore united, “in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation.”

We, the undersigned, formerly members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Baltimore, having been excluded from the fellowship of that body, by what we believe to be an unjust and oppressive process, based upon insufficient charges, and those charges not sustained by competent testimony, have, for the present, agreed to unite together a society of original Methodists, under the ~~ancient~~ Rules of the United Societies.”

Rev. John and Charles Wesley. Our object is to wait and see whether the present abuses in the administration of the government will be corrected. If they should, and freedom of inquiry and public discussion be permitted in the Methodist Episcopal Church, it would afford us pleasure to return; provided we can do so without relinquishing the opinions for which we have been excluded, namely, an honest and, as we believe, enlightened conviction that the present form of government in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as it precludes the grand principle of REPRESENTATION, and confines all legislative, executive and judicial powers to the itinerant ministry, is unscriptural and anti-Christian; and that reform in the government of said church is necessary, in order to its essential and permanent prosperity. With these views, we solemnly unite in the name of the Great Head of the church, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, receiving the Holy Scriptures as our guide; and for prudential purposes adopting as an instrument of union the "General Rules" of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, with such subsequent regulations as our peculiar circumstances may from time to time require.

John Chappell,	• Ebenezer Strahan,
John J. Harrod,	John H. W. Hawkins,
Wesley Starr,	Thomas Patterson,
John Kennard,	Samuel Krebs,
William K. Boyle,	Thomas Parsons,
Arthur Emmerson,	Thomas Jarrett,

John Gephart, jr.,	Joseph R. Forman,
John P. Howard,	George Northerman,
Levi R. Reese,	Samuel Thompson,
Lambert Thomas,	Samuel Guest,
Samuel Jarrett,	John P. Paul.

Baltimore, December 23, 1827.

We, the undersigned, elders, deacons and licensed preachers, subscribe our names respectively to the foregoing instrument, approving the objects contemplated therein.

Samuel K. Jennings,	Luther J. Cox,
Daniel E. Reese,	John S. Reese,
James R. Williams,	John C. French,
William Kesley,	Reuben T. Boyd.
Thomas McCormick,	

Baltimore, January 26, 1828.

We now come to record an act which, for magnanimity of purpose, will justly challenge a parallel in church history. It is the course pursued and the measures adopted by the ladies of Baltimore on account of the fatal results attending the administration of Mr. Hanson, in the expulsion of their "husbands, fathers," &c., from the church of their choice. The firmness and moderation which they evinced, and the zeal and devotedness which they exhibited under the circumstances, are above all praise.

BALTIMORE, DECEMBER 31, 1827.

At a meeting of female members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, convened at the Rev. Dr. Jennings's, for the purpose of taking into consideration



the most advisable course to be pursued by the wives and friends of those members of said church who have been expelled, and of those ministers who are suspended by the official members of the Baltimore Station, for the sake of reform; the meeting was opened with prayer; and, on motion, Mrs. Rebecca Hall was called to the chair, and Mrs. Wesley Woods was appointed secretary.

On motion, resolved, that the members of this meeting deeply regret the necessity of withdrawing from the Methodist Episcopal Church; yet, from a conviction of duty, we do hereby resolve to withdraw from said church, when our husbands, fathers or friends shall have been expelled.

On motion, resolved, that a committee of nine be appointed to consider and report on the most advisable measures to be adopted by those females who have determined to withdraw from the church. The following were appointed said committee, viz: Mrs. Mumney, Mrs. Jennings, Mrs. Harrod, Mrs. Woods, Mrs. French, Mrs. Kennard, Mrs. Reese, Miss L. Martin and Mrs. Owens. †

The meeting then adjourned to give the committee time to prepare and report such measures as they may deem most advisable.

REBECCA HALL, *President.*

MARY ANN WOODS, *Secretary.*

MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 1828.

The meeting convened for the purpose of hearing the report of the committee. The following report was read and unanimously adopted:

## REPORT.

The committee appointed to inquire into the best measures to be adopted by the female friends of reform in the government of the M. E. Church in this city, to secure their present peace and union, and their future happiness, have had the subject under serious and deliberate consideration, and beg leave to report that, inasmuch as it was unanimously resolved at our meeting on the 31st December, that on the expulsion of our husbands, fathers, &c., we would feel it our duty to withdraw from the church and unite with our expelled friends, it is expedient, in the opinion of your committee, that the wives, daughters, &c., of our friends and brethren already expelled withdraw from the church; and that all who determine on this course should address a joint letter to Mr. Hanson, stating their determination to withdraw, and assign their reasons for so doing; and also requesting of him a certificate of their acceptable membership.

And your committee further beg leave to submit the following as the form of a suitable instrument to be adopted and subscribed by the females who may withdraw from the church:

## DECLARATION.

The subscribers, members of the methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Baltimore, believing that the form of government in said church is, in some of its features, contrary to the Holy Scriptures; and that it deprives a large proportion of the

ministers and members of said church of their natural and Christian rights; and believing that the ruling authorities in this city have greatly abused the power they hold, to the injury of religion, in that they have suspended eleven local preachers, by what we consider improper measures, for aiding the cause of reform, and have expelled twenty-two lay members for the same cause, and have treated others hardly whom they have not expelled, and have for the same cause deprived most of our former class-leaders of their official standing; which preachers, members and leaders are our companions, fathers, children, or highly esteemed brethren, in whom we have the fullest Christian confidence; and by these means they have created a state of things calculated to destroy Christian union and Christian confidence. Therefore, for these and other considerations, we have determined and hereby do agree to dissolve for the present our connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, by withdrawing therefrom; and that we will address a joint letter to Rev. J. M. Hanson, expressive of our determination to this effect, and request of him a certificate of our acceptable standing in the church. And we do hereby declare that we have been impelled to this measure only by existing difficulties in the church; and that so soon as those difficulties shall be removed, and our expelled and injured friends shall be restored to the enjoyment of their former standing and privileges, on proper and Christian principles, it will be our delight to return to

the church, from which we now reluctantly retire. We further agree that until the way of our return shall become practicable, or the opening of Providence shall mark out to us some other way, we will unite in Christian communion and religious worship with each other, and with our brethren and sisters who have been or may be persecuted from the church for reform principles.

And finally we hereby declare that we have not been influenced to adopt this measure by the persuasion or other means of our husbands, relatives or friends, but from a deliberate and settled conviction of duty to our God, ourselves, and our injured friends and brethren. We therefore hereby solemnly unite ourselves together for the reasons and for the purposes before named, with a firm reliance on the support and assistance of Almighty God in this important duty and engagement.

The committee further beg leave to offer the following as a suitable form of a letter, to be sent to the preacher in charge of this station, by those females who may determine to withdraw from the church.

The letter, after receiving the signatures appended, was presented to Mr. Hanson on the Saturday preceding the lovefeast.

**REV. JAMES M. HANSON:**

We, the subscribers, female members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Balti-

more, feel ourselves under the necessity of addressing you on a subject peculiarly painful. For a series of years we have been endeavoring, in our humble sphere, to serve God and make our way to heaven. And long since the Methodist Episcopal Church became the home of our choice, where we had fondly hoped to dwell in the peaceful enjoyment of the means of grace and the ordinances of Christianity, to the end of life. In this church our dearest Christian associations and religious friendships were formed, and flourished. Our hopes, our fears, our wishes, all were identified with the church of our choice. Around all her ordinances, her services, her ministers, our best affections were entwined; and for her peace and prosperity our daily prayers were offered to a throne of grace. This preference was not given to the Methodist Episcopal Church because we considered her government more perfect than that of others; for, indeed, we were no more careful to inquire into that subject than our preachers were to give us instruction concerning it; but our preference grew out of the purity of her doctrines, the piety of her members, the excellence of her moral discipline, and her itinerant plan. And though recent events have led us to examine, more closely than heretofore, the Methodist Discipline, and this examination has resulted in a conviction of its defectiveness, in many particulars, yet we could have borne those comparatively trivial inconveniences, and could have lived happily in the bosom of the church all our days, nor had we thought of

forsaking her communion until death, but for recent occurrences which have taken place under your administration and superintendence. But, sir, to see a large number of our highly esteemed local preachers excluded from the pulpits, arraigned, condemned and excommunicated, and the seal of official silence set upon the lips which have so often conveyed heavenly consolation to our minds and hearts; to see our beloved class-leaders torn from us, and deprived of their official standing, and a large number of our lay-brethren expelled without a crime; and to see the unwarrantable measures by which these distressing results have been effected, is too painful for us! In short, to find our dear companions, fathers, brothers, children and friends treated as criminals and enemies, prosecuted, suspended and expelled; denounced as backsliders and disturbers of the peace; and to be ourselves treated coldly and distantly by our former friends, and by our pastors; and all for a mere difference of opinion about church government, is more than we feel bound in Christian charity longer to endure; and we, therefore, feel it our duty, in the fear of God, though with emotions of poignant sorrow, and with aching hearts, to withdraw from the church of our choice and fondest attachments. To this painful resort we are driven by the measures you have taken against our friends and brethren. To remain in the church under the circumstances now existing, would be to evince a want of filial, conjugal, and fraternal attachment to our persecuted friends, and a want of self-respect.

We therefore request you to consider us as withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to furnish us a joint or individual certificate of our acceptable standing, as soon as convenient.

Hannah L. Harrod,	Isabella Northerman,
Catharine Mummey,	Elizabeth Kennard,
Guinilda Mummey,	Anna Jarrett,
Mary Kennard,	Ruth Reese,
Sarah Krebs,	Rebecca Reese,
Jane Thomas,	Margaret Reese,
Elizabeth Williams,	Mary Reese,
Sarah Williams,	Margaret Patterson,
Elizabeth Taylor,	Mary French,
Mary Williams,	Sidney Boyd,
Frances Williams,	Rebecca Jane Roberts,
Catharine Williams,	Lucy Fore,
Hannah Jennings,	Mary Jane Thomas,
Mary Owings,	Jemima Jones,
Elizabeth Crouch,	Hannah Martin,
Elinor Gephart,	Letitia M. Martin,
Maria Paul,	Maria M. Martin,
Elizabeth Forman,	Maria Cox,
Phillippa Starr,	Mary Meads,
Rachel Hawkins,	Mary Ann Woods,
Elizabeth Baxley,	Catharine Wallace,
Susan Guest,	Elizabeth Brit,
Sarah Emmerson,	Mary Ann Valiant.
Elizabeth Valiant,	

Who can read unmoved the account of the proceedings of these excellent Christian ladies, and the

course they pursued when their "companions, fathers, brothers, children and friends," were prosecuted, suspended and expelled from the church? Sensible of the deep injustice done to those whom they held most dear, they prudently took the praiseworthy resolution to follow their exiled friends into their "Patmos." How excellent are the sentiments set forth in their declaration! The lovers of justice and truth may here read, pause and admire!

According to the best information afforded us, the expelled laymen associated themselves together on the 23d December, 1827. The ministers united with them January 26th, 1828, and the ladies who had withdrawn joined the association a few days afterwards.

This was no doubt, according to the best accounts the first society formed of those known, for the space of about two years, by the name of the Associated Methodist Societies; which, upon the adoption of the Constitution, took the name of the Methodist Protestant Church.

The association thus formed, "elected the preachers and ministers to serve in the same relations and offices they respectively held prior to their expulsion, and the instrument declaring this fact was recorded in the clerk's office, Baltimore. This act was deemed necessary to guard against the *effects* of representations made to the community by the old side men, that being deprived of membership, their parchments became null and void,



and consequently their ministerial acts would be illegal.”\*

The high-handed and tyrannical measures of Mr. Hanson and his committee, which they adopted to effect the expulsion of the reformers, created quite a deep sensation throughout the Methodist community in the United States. Union societies and churches, upon the receipt of the startling intelligence, held meetings and passed resolutions of abhorrence and condemnation of the administration of Rev. James M. Hanson, and of sympathy for the persecuted reformers. The communications sent to the Baltimore Union Society from north, south, east and west, were respectful in their tenor; and coming as they did from highly respectable and influential bodies of Christians, they could not fail to strengthen the hearts and hands of the exiled reformers. These numerous addresses of the Union Societies may be found in the fourth volume of the Mutual Rights for 1827-8.

In November, 1827, a general convention of reformers met in the city of Baltimore, composed of ministerial and lay delegates from the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and the District of Columbia. One hundred delegates had been appointed to attend this convention, but owing to the circumstances that generally militate against the assemblage of such a body, but fifty-seven were in attendance. This

\* Williams's History of the M. P. Church, p. 210.

body adopted a "memorial to the General Conference," praying for a joint representation from the local ministry and membership, and prepared an address to the Methodist public, both of which were published for the information of the community.

Up to this period, about twenty-four Union Societies had been formed, according to the best information extant upon the subject. The following statement may afford some idea of the date of their organization, as well as of their locality:

Baltimore Union Society,	formed May 21st, 1824
Roanoke, N. C., Auxiliary to Baltimore U. S.,	Nov. 6, 1824
Bedford county, Tennessee, Auxiliary,	. . . 1825
Cincinnati, Ohio,	" . . . 1826
N. York, Western U. Society,	" . . . 1826
Miami U. Society,	" . . . 1826
Granville, North Carolina,	" . . . 1826
Liberty Town, Maryland,	" . . . 1827
Fell's Point, Baltimore,	" . . . 1827
Shippensburg, Pennsylvania,	" . . . 1827
Centreville, Maryland,	" . . . 1827
Steubenville, Ohio,	" . . . 1827
Chestertown, Maryland,	" . . . 1827
New Market, Maryland,	" . . . 1827
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,	" . . . 1827
Somerset, Maryland,	" . . . 1827
Newtown, Maryland,	" . . . 1827
Lancaster, Virginia,	" . . . 1827
Centreville, Indiana,	" . . . 1827
New Orleans, Louisiana,	" . . . 1827
Louisville, Kentucky,	" . . . 1827
Burlington, Vermont,	" . . . 1827
Greenfield, Ohio,	" . . . 1827
Greenville, Alabama,	" . . . 1827

The reader will observe, from the preceding schedule, that Union Societies had been formed in twelve different states. In those societies were to be found some of the most distinguished ministers of the M. E. Church, in point of piety, talent and influence. But no character was too fair, at this stage of the history of reform, to be attacked and aspersed by the votaries of the Methodist Episcopal hierarchy. Even the much-honored Dr. H. B. Bascom, the present champion or defender of the M. E. Church, South, was denounced by Rev. Mr. Hanson and his co-laborers, the prosecuting committee, as "a reckless assailant that transcends all decency of invective." To be in favor of reform, or of "mutual rights," was regarded by the advocates of the old order of things as an offence calling for expulsion from the church.

#### NORTH CAROLINA.

We now turn our attention to the state of affairs in North Carolina. The Roanoke Union Society had continued to swell its numbers, and disseminate its circulars and publications throughout the state, in order to enlist the minds and feelings of the Methodist community in the cause of a republican church polity. The measures adopted by this society in the dissemination of the doctrine of mutual rights, did not fail to bring it into notice with those in authority in the M. E. Church.

Accordingly, early in the year 1828, the Virginia Annual Conference sent to the Roanoke Circuit, as

preacher in charge, the Rev. William Compton, who had figured so conspicuously in the trials and expulsions of the members of the Granville Union Society; and whose principles and character as an anti-reformer were well known in Roanoke.

From the well known *reputation* of Rev. Mr. Compton, the Roanoke Union Society had just grounds of fear upon learning that he had been appointed by the Annual Conference to be their superintendent. The appointment was an unfortunate one. The minds of the Roanoke brethren were not prepared to receive him. His previous course towards the venerable Lewellyn Jones and others on Tar River Circuit, had rendered him obnoxious to their feelings, and they naturally concluded that he had been selected in view of their position as reformers, and hence they were to become the victims of his unsparing zeal. They were no strangers to his sentiments respecting the reformers. They expected, as a matter of course, that as he had done unto other reforms, he would do even so unto them. Hence they were not prepared to receive him with that warmth of feeling and confidence of good-will which is so characteristic of Methodists.


Soon after the appointment of the Rev. William Compton to the Roanoke Circuit was known, a called meeting of the Roanoke Union Society was held. The meeting of the society was on the 4th of April, 1828. The circumstances under which they were now placed were entirely new. The

melancholy tidings of the expulsion of their brethren in Baltimore had reached them; and from the fact that one of the most prominent actors in the expulsion of seven members of the Granville Union Society, had been sent to watch over them, as preacher in charge, they naturally concluded that a storm-cloud was gathering to burst over their own heads. But they stood firm. Trusting in the justice of their cause and the rectitude of their principles, they were willing to brave the event. They had no compromise to make—no principles to sell. The path of duty led onward.

The business of the society, on the first day, was principally of a local nature. On the next day, April 5th, the following resolutions were offered by Rev. William Bellamy and adopted by the society, being such as fairly defined their position and principles in view of all the circumstances.

“1. That as the sense of this meeting the conduct of our brethren in the city of Baltimore, and elsewhere, who have been expelled from the church on account of their attachment to the principles of religious and ecclesiastical liberty, as contended for by the reformers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, is justly entitled to our approbation as fellow advocates for truth, and our strongest Christian sympathies as a religious community.

“2. That as the sense of this meeting, our sisters in the city of Baltimore, who have recently escaped from the church in consequence of the ‘abomination which maketh desolate, standing where it



ought not,' are also entitled to our friendly sympathies and Christian salutations."

The above resolutions were ordered to be forwarded to the editorial committee of the Mutual Rights, at Baltimore, to be disposed of as they should think proper.

The following resolutions, next in order, were offered by brother L. Whitaker.

"1. That the expulsion of Lewellyn Jones and others, in the Tar River Circuit, during the year 1826, for joining the Union Society there; and more particularly the part borne in that unfortunate transaction, by the Rev. Wm. Compton, now appointed to this circuit as a minister, meets with the decided disapprobation of this society.

"2. That individually we apprehend a similar course is intended to be pursued towards us: it being a sound maxim that what has been done, in all probability will be repeated.

"3. Therefore, that before we can receive as a messenger of peace the said William Compton, we must be assured that he will endeavor to repair the wrong he has committed, by using his best efforts to restore to the Methodist Episcopal Church the said Lewellyn Jones and others that were expelled for the same cause.

"4. That the corresponding committee furnish the Rev. William Compton with a copy of these resolutions, requesting his answer thereto."

These resolutions, as appears from the journal, were all adopted unanimously. They are couched

in no ambiguous language, but express in decided terms the undivided sentiments of the Roanoke Union Society.

The Rev. William Compton was furnished in due time with a copy by the committee of correspondence, to which he returned the following reply:

*To the members of the Roanoke Union Society.*

DEAR BRETHREN,—From the friendly and respectful treatment I received from the reformers, on my first round on the circuit, I had flattered myself that, however we might differ in our sentiments on church government, nothing unpleasant would occur between you and me through the year. But from a communication received from you, I am apprehensive that I shall be disappointed; for be ye well assured that I am not conscious of having done wrong in the part that I acted in Quarterly Conference, in reference to Lewellyn Jones and others. As to the reformers in this circuit, I had indulged a hope that they would not interfere with me or my concerns,\* but were willing that I should think for

\* From this passage it is very plain that the author wishes it to be inferred that he is the aggrieved party in this affair, and is endeavoring to turn the scales and make himself a persecuted being, to whom the right of private judgment is denied; and he writes with as much assurance as if the fact were so. In the name of goodness, who would suppose, from perusing the passage referred to, that W. Compton had ever in his life censured (much more punished, and that severely too,) a brother for the same thing he affects to plead for? Who could suppose that, with so much charity on his lips, he had ever raised his hand against an inoffensive man? Yet

myself, and that they would cast their influence with mine into the common scale of truth, and do what they could to help forward the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. While I had concluded within myself that, if they continued to conduct themselves as they had done since I came into the circuit, so far as I had knowledge of their proceedings, that I should leave them as my predecessor had done before me. You seem resolved not to receive me as a "messenger of peace," unless I give the assurance you have demanded. This I shall not do; and of course I am rejected. But I should like to know by whom; not in the aggregate, but by name; for I cannot consistently darken the door or eat the bread of any man into whose house I am not received as a "messenger of peace;" and if it be by a majority of the representative department of any class that I am thus rejected, I should take it as an instance of candor and honesty to be advertised of the fact, that I may shape my course accordingly. I have no hesitation in saying that I

it is so. This identical W. Compton, (unless we believe the eastern tale of the dervise killing the king and leaving his own body and taking up his abode in that of his majesty, and that this is only W. Compton in appearance, and the soul in the body is quite another existence,) within less than two years, in one day's journey of Bradford's church, had exerted all his influence, and boasted the accomplishment of his object, not only to censure but to punish Jones and others for attempting practically to exercise the very principle he so affectingly ranted about. Such is the fact. Surely this is "something new."

**A MEMBER OF THE ROANOKE U. SOCIETY.**



am on the old side, where I mean to continue, unless my mind should very materially change, or the majority should say that there shall be a change in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Nor have I any idea that any of the reforming brethren in this circuit will change their ground, for the same reason that I shall not change mine.

Wherefore, then, permit me to ask, is the necessity of our agitating this subject, when we know that both the one and the other are fixed in their purpose? Have we time hanging so heavily on our hands, that we must necessarily pass it off in a way which is often the means of harrowing up the feelings of brethren? Would we not act more wisely to "agree to disagree," and let this subject be more still in our frequent conversations with each other? Surely, my brethren, we must admit that there has been too much asperity on both sides already, and that it is high time for us to deplore the languishing state of Zion in this circuit. Time is flying with the rapidity of light, and souls more precious a thousand fold than the gold of Ophir, are peopling the eternal world by myriads. And should we not then, instead of catching at shadows, nerve the strong arm of faith and take of the things of God and eternity, and show them to a dying world? Let this be the burden of our concern and the object of our contention, and then may we hope to see the waste places of our beloved Zion restored.

And, finally, let it be for the man of sin, but not for the man of God, (and more especially the minis-

ter of Jesus Christ,) to say that the man who does not see exactly as he sees, is not a "messenger of peace." Reject me if you think proper, brethren, and with me the gospel of Christ; but take care that in so doing you do not "reject the counsel of God against yourselves." With these remarks, I conclude by taking the liberty of subscribing myself, dear brethren, yours in the kingdom and patience of Jesus.

WILLIAM COMPTON.

May 5th, 1828.

On the 6th of June following the Roanoke Union Society met at Bradford's Chapel, and the letter of Rev. Mr. Compton was read before that body. The committee of correspondence made a report upon said letter, in the form of a review of its contents, which was adopted and published, together with the letter, in one of the political papers of the day. The following is the

REVIEW REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE.

Your committee think they will not be deemed by this society, to take any thing on themselves but what as a committee of correspondence they ought to do, if they endeavor to exhibit to the society, its situation as a society in regard to the perils of its members, and to justify the course of the society in the adoption of the resolutions aforesaid; in doing which, it becomes proper to examine the circumstances under which they were adopted.

Recent information from Baltimore, giving details of occurrences there, in which the Rev. Mr. Hanson acted so notable a part, had placed the matter beyond the reach of reasonable doubt, that it had become the decided determination of the rulers in our church to expel from its membership all such as had the hardihood, in their estimation, to question their justice or their infallibility. It was, in other words, declared an offence, and for its commission the party was expelled, if in the exercise of a right guaranteed to us by all our fundamental laws, any member should declare in his opinion a minister of the gospel had committed wrong—an offence of so trivial a nature as not to be finable if committed towards the highest officer recognized by these United States. It is also a fact beyond the reach of self-denial, that one Lewellyn Jones, in Tar River Circuit, had been lately expelled for becoming a member of a Union Society. It was also a fact equally notorious, that in the transaction the Rev. William Compton had taken a decisive and active part in behalf of irresponsible power.

When this society was informed that the said Rev. Wm. Compton was appointed to take charge of this circuit, it could but occur to the society so apparently that it was impossible but it should notice it, that its own membership stood on a foundation somewhat precarious, with a minister who had *avowed his determination not to be neutral*; who had compared reformers to “thieves and tories;” who charged them with designs to overturn whatever he

considered lovely or venerable in our church; who had boldly and with complacency declared that the reformers might be expelled, though they were guilty of no immoral act; who had avowed it to be both "just and generous" to ransack the conversations of men at great distances, and fix whatever was exceptionable in them on the accused person, however innocent he might be of their thoughts or ignorant of their expressions; it is conceived by your committee that the society was urged both by a sense of sympathy to the injured and safety to itself, to adopt the resolutions.

The society feeling, as it ought to have done, the weight of its responsibility, was bound by every consideration that ought to influence it, to ascertain in direct terms whether its fears were reasonable or groundless; thinking, if they were the latter, no candid, no religious man could or would for one moment refuse to make reparation for an injury committed by him; if the former, how is it possible that it could receive, as a *brother*, as a minister, as a "messenger of peace," the man who of all others had made himself so conspicuous in committing *havoc* among its brethren? It is not in nature to do so.

Your committee are of opinion that the apprehensions of the society were reasonable, and that the answer of the said Rev. Wm. Compton to the resolutions of this society has reduced it to a certainty that they were so. The letter declares that the writer had come to the conclusion to leave the

reformers here as he found them ; but at the same time he gives us to understand that he had done so from the very friendly treatment he had received from them ; and even this small boon is taxed with their demeaning themselves in the same way, as far as his knowledge of their conduct extended. Your committee, while they express the satisfaction of knowing that the very friendly conduct of the reformers had disarmed a *belligerant*, are at the same time of opinion that the difficulty of obtaining a court to answer his purpose, in the manner prescribed in the book of Discipline, might very possibly have been an inducement in the formation of the said determination. The answer to your resolution further declares, and that too in a manner that we cannot hesitate to believe the truth of the declaration, that as respects the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Compton in the affair of Lewellyn Jones, he feels no degree of compunction. Your committee, therefore, *cannot hesitate to think that in regard to each one of your society, his abilities would be exerted and his power lent to place us where the said Lewellyn Jones is—out of the pale of the church.\**

But our brother Compton affects to believe that your resolutions are predicated on the circumstance of his being *anti*-reformation ; that his belief is but affectation becomes apparent from the fact that it must be known to him that no such resolution was adopted in regard to the Rev. Mr. Carson, the Rev. Mr. Bain, the Rev. Mr. Doub, or the Rev. Mr.

\* How soon was this all realized !—AUTHOR.

Hooks, all known to be in principle against reform ; and from the fact that the resolutions themselves do not even so much as imply such a construction.

The resolutions say, in the first place, that the society disapproves the expulsion of Lewellyn Jones, and that disapprobation is founded on the circumstance of Lewellyn Jones being a reformer, and being expelled therefor. In the second place, the society disapproves the part taken in regard to Jones by the Rev. William Compton. In the third place, the Rev. Mr. Compton being appointed to take charge of this circuit, the society says it is apprehensive a similar course is intended to be pursued in regard to each member ; and in consequence of all these circumstances united, it resolves that before it can receive as a " messenger of peace the said Rev. Wm. Compton, it must be assured that he will repair the wrong he has committed, by using his best efforts to restore to the church the said Lewellyn Jones." Your committee beg leave to call the attention of the society to the fact that the Rev. Mr. Compton takes no notice whatever, in his very mild and friendly letter, of the second resolution, the one most interesting to this society. Our brother seems to reproach us with a waste of time, and that too in a manner calculated to harrow the feelings of brethren. In one respect your resolutions were a waste of time, since on him they seem to be of no effect. From the tenor of his letter, your just fears seem to be regarded in the same light as a crowned head would the remonstrances

of his subjects, when he was determined to disregard them.

The world is not centred, however, in one man. Your committee are of opinion that the cause for which this society is contending, and in furtherance of which the resolutions were passed, (it seems to them, at least, to be of that importance,) that a few days, or weeks, or years, may be very profitably devoted to it, without deserving the reproach of a waste of time. Since, however, it is almost criminal in the view of the Rev. William Compton to harrow the feelings of a brother, and in this your committee can very readily join, it would be well to inquire if none have feelings but the *anties*. Had Jones no feelings when, dragged before an unrelenting tribunal, he heard his name associated with *tories*, and at the same time saw himself thrown from the membership of the church, and that too for an act declared by his judges to constitute nothing immoral? Had Harris no sensibility when charged by this self-same man\* with turning others from the simplicity of the gospel? It were useless to follow this subject further—the adage is exemplified, that “we are guilty of what we blame in others.”

Our brother's letter has one remarkable passage, the import of which your committee hope he did not intend; the passage is this: “Reject me if you think proper, and with me the gospel of Christ.” Your committee, in regard to this part of the letter of the said Rev. Wm. Compton, are persuaded that

\* See Rev. W. Compton's letter to Ivey Harris.

no reasonable man can for one moment suppose that the rejection of any one man amounts to the rejection of the gospel of our Saviour; if it did, we apprehend that few would be in the pale of that gospel. Your committee, without commenting on the vanity and self-sufficiency of the man in arrogating to himself so eminent a distinction, will barely remark, that if the rejection by this society of the Rev. Wm. Compton, as a "messenger of peace" to it, places its members in the awful situation of rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, what is the situation of the man who uses his mission as a means to oppress and to deprive of communion with his Maker a soul that has been purchased by the blood of the Saviour?

Your committee are forced to believe, on a review of the whole matter, that though possibly to some the mission of our brother Compton may be one of peace, *yet to this society it evidently carries with it and sends before it the emblems of war.*

Something is said, in the reply to your resolutions, about the representative departments of the different societies. Your committee (to this part of it) are at a loss to understand the object of the writer. He boldly avows himself to be on that side of this controversy which denies the semblance of representation from the membership of the church. Your committee, therefore, are of opinion that this society should take no steps to inform the said Rev. Wm. Compton of the names of those who voted in the affirmative or negative on the passage of the resolutions referred to.



By your resolutions your course is now decided; from the answer of the Rev. Mr. Compton, his seems to be equally as much so. Your committee, therefore, recommend the adoption of the following resolutions :

1. That this society deem it inexpedient to make any reply to the letter of the Rev. Mr. Compton.

2. That this society is engaged in a contest involving interests to its members of a class the most important.

3. That its members will make cause with each other, and will stand by each other in every emergency.

4. By the members of this society individually, that they make no disclosures, no concessions, and no apologies of what nor for what has been done in this society, for the sake of peace or advantage to themselves, and of throwing blame on others, otherwise than may be ordered by the society itself.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

## CHAPTER VI.

Resolutions of the General Conference of 1828.—Notification of Rev. Mr. Compton to the ministers of the Roanoke Union Society.—Examination of the grounds assumed by Mr. Compton.—Trials of the local ministers at Horeb.—Expulsions of the same.—Expulsions on Albemarle, in the eastern part of North Carolina.

FROM what has been related in the preceding chapter, we have seen that the position of the Rev. Mr. Compton, in regard to the Roanoke Union Society, was one that augured not much of good.

But even that was destined to be soon changed for one that promised still less. In May (a few weeks preceding his communication to the Union Society) the General Conference met at Pittsburg. The brethren who had been expelled at Baltimore sent up a memorial to that body, setting forth the irregular and improper proceedings which had been had against them; and by which they had been expelled from the church, and respectfully petitioned that body to take such measures as, in their wisdom, should restore them to the church of their former fellowship, and that "those likewise who had withdrawn on their account might be received with them on principles which should secure to them and the church the liberty of speech and of the press, without sanctioning the licentiousness of either." The General Conference adopted resolu-

tions, laying down certain principles or conditions upon which the expelled and withdrawn might again become united with the church. But these conditions were such as the expelled could not conscientiously accede to. Contending as they had been for principles and rights, they saw in these resolutions not even the semblance of a bait to allure. Although they advised that no further proceedings be had against the reformers for any past agency or connection with Union Societies or the "Mutual Rights," yet the Rev. Mr. Compton affected to seize upon these *very resolutions* as affording him new, special and enlarged authority to proceed upon a vigorous campaign against the members of the Roanoke Union Society. In order that the reader may fully understand the flimsy pretensions of this reverend gentleman, we shall here bring forward the resolutions of the General Conference.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1828,

IN REPLY TO THE EXPELLED BRETHREN.

Whereas an unhappy excitement has existed in some parts of our work, in consequence of the organization of what have been called Union Societies, for purposes and under regulations believed to be inconsistent with the peace and harmony of the church; and in relation to the character of much of the matter contained in a certain periodical publication called "Mutual Rights," in regard to which certain expulsions from the church have taken

place; and whereas this General Conference indulge a hope that a mutual desire may exist for conciliation and peace, and is desirous of leaving open a way for the accomplishment of so desirable an object, on safe and equitable principles: therefore, resolved, by the delegates of the Annual Conferences, in General Conference assembled,

1. That in view of the premises, and in the earnest hope that this measure may tend to promote this object, this General Conference affectionately advises that no further proceedings may be had in any part of our work against any member or minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any past agency or concern in relation to the above named periodical, or in relation to any Union Society above mentioned.

2. If any persons expelled as aforesaid feel free to concede that publications have appeared in said "Mutual Rights," the nature and character of which were unjustifiably inflammatory, and do not admit of vindication; and that in others, though for want of proper information or unintentionally, have yet in fact misrepresented individuals and facts, and that they regret these things; if it be voluntarily agreed also that the Union Societies above alluded to shall be abolished, and the periodical called the "Mutual Rights" be discontinued at the close of the current volume, which shall be completed with due respect to the conciliatory and pacific design of this arrangement, then this General Conference does hereby give authority for the restoration to their

ministry or membership respectively, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of any person or persons so expelled as aforesaid; provided this arrangement shall be mutually assented to by any individual or individuals so expelled, and also by the Quarterly Meeting Conference, and the minister or preacher having the charge of any circuit or station within which any such expulsion may have taken place; and that no such minister or preacher shall be obliged, under this arrangement, to restore any such individual as leader of any class or classes, unless in his own discretion he shall judge it proper so to do; and provided, also, that it be further mutually agreed that no other periodical publication, to be devoted to the same controversy, shall be established on either side, it being expressly understood, at the same time, that this, if agreed to, will be on the ground not of any assumption of right to require this, but of mutual consent, for the restoration of peace, and that no individual will be hereby precluded from issuing any publication which he may judge proper, on his own responsibility.

It is further understood that any individual or individuals who may have withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any proceedings in relation to the premises, may also be restored by mutual consent, under this arrangement, on the same principles above stated.

The preceding resolutions of the General Conference were published in the "Christian Advocate

and Journal," soon after the rise of the conference ; and under pretext of authority from these, the Rev. Mr. Compton shortly afterwards commenced his crusade against the Roanoke Union Society. From his proceedings on record, it appears that he chose to begin with the ministers. Accordingly he sent to each one of them belonging to Roanoke Circuit the following notification. The following is a copy of the one sent to Rev. William Bellamy. The original is before me.

AUGUST 14, 1828.

**MR. BELLAMY :**

Sir,—The General Conference of May last resolved that on certain conditions those reformers who have been expelled the church should be restored to their former standing. Which implies that if these conditions are not complied with, they shall not be restored. The plain inference is, that those who have not been expelled, and who are guilty of the same things, must either comply with these conditions or expect to share the same fate. Since therefore the 4th volume of the "Mutual Rights" is now completed, I take the liberty of informing you that I conceive that the General Conference has made it my duty to request you to dissolve the "Union Society" of which you are a member, so far as you are concerned, and to cease to patronize the "Mutual Rights." Also you are hereby notified that, if you will not comply with these conditions, you may prepare for trial before a committee ; and also for having "inveighed against the government of the

church," and for expressions that you have indulged. The time of the trial you will be informed of hereafter. Respectfully yours,

WM. COMPTON.

From the tenor of this notification or circular of the Rev. Mr. Compton to the local ministers belonging to the Union Society, it must be evident that he wished to place them without the pale of the church. He heeded not the published resolutions of the General Conference. He acted not according to the counsel and advice of that body, although he professed to shape his course according to the conditions which it laid as a rule of action in the premises. Hear what the General Conference says: "1st. That in view of the premises, and in the earnest hope that this measure may tend to promote this object, the General Conference affectionately advises that no further proceedings may be had in any part of our work, against any member or minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any past agency or concern, in relation to the above named periodical, or in relation to any Union Society above mentioned."

Hear what the Rev. William Compton says: "The plain inference is that those who have not been expelled, and who are guilty of the same things, must either comply with those conditions, or expect to share the same fate."

What a false and wretched deduction from such fair premises! How discordant are the sentiments

advanced! Does this professed minister of the gospel give the least assurance, by such declarations as the above, that he is the "messenger of peace" to these men, his brethren in the ministry? He does not. The majority of them were his seniors in the sacred office, men of unsullied purity of morals, of extensive Christian and ministerial influence, had done much for the cause of religion and of the church; yet the notes of *love* are not heard in the voice of this circular addressed to them by a co-laborer in the cause of the Redeemer.

No argument is used by the minister to dissuade them from their present course; but to all human appearance he speaks altogether as one who is disposed to lord it over God's heritage. No kind admonition is given—no Christian entreaty or appeal is made to these brethren. They are sternly addressed as offenders, and two unjust and unreasonable alternatives are presented to them, without being advised as to which they should accept. The subject is presented in the attitude of menace, either "to dissolve the Union Society of which you are a member, so far as you are concerned, and cease to patronize the Mutual Rights," or else "prepare for trial before a committee," the time of which trial they would be informed of.

To become members of a Union Society infringed upon no man's rights; violated no precept of morality or religion. To discuss freely and frankly the principles and polity of the church of which they were members, and in the service of which some of



them had spent many years of toil and privations as itinerants, was a right which, as freemen, they knew not how to yield. Their organization of a Union Society had for its object a reformation in the government of that church, by the introduction of the principle of representation into the same, that her peace, her usefulness, and her prosperity might be promoted. The "Mutual Rights" was a periodical devoted to this same object. The numerous essays published in its columns upon the subject of church polity, were written by distinguished ministers and members of the church, and of whose attachment and zeal for her true interests no one could justly doubt. In patronizing this periodical they involved no man in responsibility but themselves, the expense incurred they paid from their own purses; and yet in view of all these things they are notified "to dissolve the Union Society, and cease to patronize the "Mutual Rights," and in the very preface of that notification they are given to understand that a failure of implicit obedience on their part, to this *mandate*, would cause them to share "*the same fate*" of those brethren who had been ejected from the church in other parts of the United States.

The character of this "*anti-reformer*" was well known to the members of the Roanoke Union Society. Against the reformers belonging to the Granville Union Society his influence had been exerted to exclude them from the pale of the church, and his arguments in justification of that affair were publicly known.

Again, in the very first words in the opening address of this circular admonition, there is something that appears quite ominous. Instead of the fraternal and courteous term of "*brother*," so generally used among Christians, we notice this address opens with "*Mr. Bellamy*."

Indeed, this opening address of the circular admonitory, if it admits of such an appellation, was quite significant. It seemed to furnish presumptive evidence that these ministers of the gospel were not regarded as "brethren in Christ" by him who had now come to exercise authority in the church.

This circular of Rev. Mr. Compton served as a premonition of what was to ensue. At this time there were eleven ministers and preachers members of the Roanoke Union Society, who belonged to the circuit under his superintendency. The circular produced no effect upon any, save Rev. M. Smith, who soon after addressed a letter to the society signifying his desire to withdraw, which was granted. Matters had now arrived at a crisis; the ministers refused obedience to the mandate of the superintendent—the die was cast.

From the original papers before me, Rev. Mr. Compton's circular bears date August 14th; and sixteen days thereafter, the 30th of the same month, he proceeded to summon the victims for the sacrifice. There is said to be "policy in war," and the steps taken in this procedure strongly indicate the policy of the principal actor. It was fairly understood that the ministers who were members of the

Union Society, with their friends who were official members upon Roanoke Circuit, would constitute a respectable majority of the Quarterly Meeting Conference, before which body the cases of the accused would ultimately come, and if so, the measures of Rev. Mr. Compton would meet with certain defeat. This was easily foreseen. He, therefore, so arranged the order of business as to summon seven of the ministers to trial at one time; it being well known that if that number were suspended by a trial before a committee, and divested of the right of voting on the case of each other in the Quarterly Conference, the prosecuting officer would be able to carry his point.

The ministers cited to trial were Rev. William Bellamy, Rev. James Hunter, Rev. Henry Bradford, Rev. Eli B. Whitaker, Rev. Albriton Jones, Rev. William Price and Rev. Miles Nash. It appears that from some cause not easily explained at this time, Rev. C. H. Hines was not summoned; although from the beginning he had been side by side with the foremost of the others in the cause of mutual rights. As to Rev. Caswell Drake and Rev. R. Divison, a more summary mode of procedure was reserved for them.

The following is a true copy of one of the citations issued—the original is before me.

AUGUST 30, 1828.

MR. BELLAMY,—You are hereby notified that the committee on your case will meet at Shady Grove meeting-house, on Saturday, October 4th, before

whom you are requested to appear for trial, if you think proper.

WM. COMPTON,

*Assistant Preacher in Roanoke Circuit.*

These seven local ministers being summoned to trial at one of the extreme points of the circuit, and from thirty to forty miles distant to most of them, and being furnished with *no* charges or specifications against them, and being well aware of the manner in which the prosecuting officer, Rev. Mr. Compton, was competent to exercise his arbitrary powers, not one of them attended trial.

Mr. Compton's committee consisted of the Rev. Henry Fitts, a rabid anti-reformer, Rev. Thomas Cottrell, and J. J. Judge, a young licentiate, whom Rev. Mr. Compton had very recently prevailed upon to accept of license to preach, and for very just reasons this was supposed by many to be for the purpose of aiding more effectually in carrying out his purposes; as he likewise took care to appoint another class-leader in a society which already had one, which was deemed sufficient for the society, thereby contributing to his strength to oppose the advocates of mutual rights.

The committee, as above constituted, met; the charges and specifications prepared by Rev. Mr. Compton, who acted in the double capacity of prosecutor and judge, were presented and acted upon; and the seven local ministers were suspended from the exercise of the sacred office of the ministry. According to the regulations of discipline in the M. E. Church, the cases of the suspended

ministers would necessarily come up for definite action before the ensuing Quarterly Meeting Conference, which was to meet at Horeb, on the 25th of the same month, (October,) 1828.

The suspended local ministers were prompt in attending the Quarterly Conference. They entertained a hope at least of having an impartial hearing before that body, but they were doomed to disappointment. He who could lend his influence in the quarterly conference of Tar River Circuit, to excommunicate the venerable Lewellyn Jones and others from the church of God, without even a suspicion of immorality being brought against them; no charge alleged but being members of a Union Society; and who could say, upon reviewing the whole affair, "*I believe him justly expelled*,"—was not to be foiled in his measures of that sort in his own Quarterly Meeting Conference, at this time—his men were there.

When the cases of the suspended ministers were called up, objections were made against the preacher in charge, Rev. William Compton, and his three committee men being permitted to sit upon the trials now pending, upon the ground that they had sat and decided upon the same before. But the presiding elder, Rev. Joseph Carson, decided that they were legally competent.

No formal report of the action or verdict of the committee was presented, but a list of charges and specifications were produced and read against the accused; being nearly similar against each one.

The following is a copy of the charges and specifications against the Rev. William Bellamy, taken from the minutes :

“Charge 1. Endeavoring to sow dissension by inveighing against the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

“Specification 1. Introducing and furthering opposition to the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

“Specification 2. His rejection of William Compton from the authority assigned him by one of the superintendents of said church.

“Specification 3. The circulation of a paper called the Tarborough Free Press, containing much inveteracy against Methodism, and certain false assertions against William Compton.

“Specification 4. His contempt of Wm. Compton's authority, in publishing the said Compton's notification and citation.

“Charge 2. His refusing to comply with the resolution of the General Conference of 1828, as contained in the Christian Advocate and Journal, of June 20, 1828.

“Specification 1. His not withdrawing from the Union Society of Roanoke Circuit.

“Specification 2. A manifest determination to rebel against the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by sending up delegates to the Baltimore Convention.”

In reviewing the preceding charges and specifications, we find no allegations for any thing of an

immoral character. The first specification appears to be founded upon the fact that the accused was one of the original members of the Roanoke Union Society.\*

The second, that he was still a member of that society when the resolutions were adopted, which the Rev. Mr. Compton seems to have regarded as equivalent to his rejection. These resolutions expressed sentiments perfectly in unison with the feelings of every lover of justice and truth under all the circumstances. They are as follow :

“Resolved, That the expulsion of Lewellyn Jones and others, in the Tar River Circuit, in the year 1826, for joining the Union Society there, and more particularly the part borne in that unfortunate transaction by the Rev. William Compton, now appointed a minister in this circuit, meets with the decided disapprobation of this society.

“Resolved, That individually we apprehend a similar course is intended to be pursued towards ourselves: it being a sound maxim, that what has been done in all probability will be repeated.

\* In order to show the nature and bearing of the testimony produced to sustain the first specification, I shall here introduce the evidence of Mr. A. W. Moore, who testified as follows: “Some two or three years past, myself and the Rev. William Bellamy were in conversation on the subject of *reform* in our church, at which time the said Bellamy told me that the principle of *reform* *had had* its influence on his mind for some time; and, if I do not mistake, he said it was made known to the brethren by himself, requesting them to think on the subject and make ready for its defence.—*From the Minutes.*

"Resolved, therefore, That before we can receive as a messenger of peace the said Rev. W. Compton, we must be assured that he will endeavor to repair the wrong he has committed by using his best efforts to restore to the Methodist Episcopal Church, the said Lewellyn Jones and others that were expelled for the same cause."

The assurance here asked by the members of the Union Society, the Rev. Mr. Compton was unwilling to give. To have done so would have been a confession of error on his part, and human nature has an antipathy to saying "I have done wrong." In the absence of the assurance asked, they were not able to receive their minister as a "messenger of peace," when he had declared, and the fact was published to the world, that as it regarded the reformers he had "*resolved to be no longer neutral.*" That being a well known fact, how could he be received as a messenger of peace by them? After the adoption of these resolutions by the Union Society, the Rev. Mr. Compton saw proper, for reasons as yet inexplicable, *to leave out of his circuit or charge five churches*, respectable in numbers, piety and influence, virtually cutting them off from the connexion, and abandoning them altogether as a minister, and leaving the world vaguely to suppose that this was done simply because less than one-third, or one-fourth, of the aggregate of the members of those churches were members of the Union Society. If this minister wished to be regarded as a "messenger of peace," this step involved him in a funda-



mental error. It admits of no palliation. These churches, as such, had not rejected his authority; nor had less than one-third of their members, as connected with the Union Society, required him to give an assurance to them of his character as a messenger of peace, in order to enable them to receive him as such.

“Specification 3. The circulation of a paper called the Tarborough Free Press, containing much inveteracy against Methodism, and certain false assertions against W. Compton.”

This specification seems to require, from its character, a particular examination, inasmuch as the paper in question is alleged to contain certain false assertions against W. Compton. The Tarborough Free Press is a political paper; the number produced on trial to sustain the specification is dated July 18, 1828. A number of the same date is before me. The paper contains an address setting forth “to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church” the state of affairs with regard to the subject of reform at that time. It notices the formation of Union Societies, and the persecutions and expulsions that had befallen the members of the same. It likewise contains a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Roanoke Union Society and sent to Rev. W. Compton; Rev. W. Compton’s reply to the same; a review of that reply by the committee of correspondence; nearly all of which are to be found in the preceding chapter of this work. Also, a postscript of some five columns, from

the pen of Col. S. Whitaker, in which he reviews the course pursued by Rev. Mr. Compton towards the members of the Granville Union Society; the position assumed by the same reverend gentleman upon Roanoke Circuit; and examines, with the acumen and learning of a jurist, the question of right concerning the appointment of Rev. William Compton to Roanoke Circuit, and his exercise of authority over the churches in that circuit; and concludes with "observations on the influence of ecclesiastical principles over the civil institutions of all countries." In all these things the writer is unable to detect either the semblance of "inveteracy against Methodism," or of "false assertions against Wm. Compton;" but of truth and logical arguments, illustrated by facts, and directed against anti-republican principles and irresponsible power.

The Roanoke Union Society published many of its circulars and transaction in the Tarborough Free Press; contracted for and circulated a large amount of its numbers containing their publications, among the Methodist community. This was offensive to Mr. Compton. The diffusion of light and knowledge, with regard to the polity of the church, did not suit his views of Christian propriety.

"Specification 4. His contempt of Wm. Compton's authority in publishing the said Compton's notification and citation." This is the most ridiculous of all the items in the count. The Tarborough Free Press had been subsidized by the Union Society, and upon the reception of the "notification

and citation," each having the semblance of something new under the sun, and the accused feeling himself under no obligation to keep secret such documents as the Rev. Mr. Compton might send him, he very frankly consented to place them in the columns of that paper, there being no rule of church forbidding him such liberty, yet he was held to account for it.

Specification 1st, under charge 2d. His not withdrawing from the Union Society of Roanoke Circuit.

He had an indefeasible right to unite with the Union Society for the objects therein contemplated; and as he contravened no law either of God or man, no human authority had a right to require him to withdraw from it.

"Specification 2. A manifest determination to rebel against the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by sending up delegates to the Baltimore convention."

The fact that the accused was present at a meeting of the members of the Methodist Church, which was held for the purpose, to appoint delegates to attend a general convention of the friends of reform at Baltimore, was relied on to support this item in the count. During the interval between the trial before the committee and the sitting of the Quarterly Conference it appears that the Rev. Mr. Compton had been quite busy in traversing the country and obtaining certificates from a distance to enable him to carry his point. The Rev. Mr. Bellamy was the only person brought to trial on Saturday, the first

day of the Quarterly Conference session. The friends of mutual rights made as firm and resolute a defence in his case as possible; but they were overpowered by being outnumbered. The prosecutor had been able to muster a majority at that time and place to sustain his measures and doctrines. He was no novice in such business.

It was during the discussions, pro and con, that the Rev. Joseph Carson decided "that when a preacher is appointed to a circuit, he is bound to go or leave the itinerancy, and if he does go, every member in the circuit *must receive* him and give him obedience or leave the church." To which the late Dr. Jno. F. Bellamy, a member of the Quarterly Conference, replied, "that when a preacher is appointed by the bishop to a circuit, he must go, and has no appeal therefrom, I am fully aware was the rock on which O'Kelly and his associates were wrecked; but do I correctly understand you to say that, if he does go, all the members in the circuit are bound to give him *implicit* obedience?" The chair replied, "You do correctly understand me." "Then," said Dr. Bellamy, "if this be the odious doctrine of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I will not stay a moment longer in it, for I owe *implicit* obedience to none but my God."

The local ministers were well aware that from the similarity of the charges alleged, the fate of all would be determined in the case of the first. The sun had gone down. Day had departed, and sable night had spread her curtains of darkness ~~all~~

around, when the vote was taken, and the Rev. William Bellamy, one of the first itinerant preachers who had traveled in Carolina, who had served as yoke-fellow with Bishop George in those early days of Methodism, was found guilty—expelled the church—the seal of official silence set upon his lips.

And all this was for the wondrous offence of being in favor of a reformation in the government of the church. Surely that was a propitious hour for such a deed! For the of sake religion we will pass in silence the events of the following Sabbath day. The Quarterly Conference adjourned until Monday. The remaining six local ministers saw nothing before them but what they had seen meted out to the brother whose case had been decided. Hope had departed, but they were determined to face the storm they were unable to resist, with that firmness and constancy of purpose which became men possessed of unshaken confidence in the justice and righteousness of their principles. Monday came. The Quarterly Conference met. Minister after minister was called up—charged—found guilty—deposed from the sacred office, and excluded from the communion of the church. They had served the church long and faithfully. Five of them had toiled in her service as itinerants. The Rev. James Hunter had filled the office of presiding elder. But these labors, these services, were of no avail. They were guilty of being in favor of a change in the government of that church, and therefore unfit to declare the sweet and consoling truths of salvation—

unfit for union among her membership or communion with her, although their religious morals were above suspicion.

The last of the seven ministers who were accused, Rev. William Price, was now called up. He was venerable on account of his age and the sanctity of his manners. He was one of the band who had followed the fortunes of Washington from battle-field to battle-field. He was well acquainted with the nature and extent of his right, and by hard-earned experience well knew and understood what those rights had cost. After having looked on and witnessed the trials and expulsions of his brethren, his turn had now arrived.

The charges and specifications against him being read, a proposition was made to him, that if he would abandon the Union Society, and give up his principles of reform, the charges would be withdrawn. This proposition was met with a scorn becoming the man. His speech is too good to be lost. I shall give an extract of a letter written by the Rev. James Hunter, who was present, addressed to the editor of the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," in which a graphic description of the address is given.

NORTH CAROLINA, NOVEMBER 3, 1828.

DEAR BROTHER :

Since I wrote to you we have had warm work on old Roanoke Circuit. The Rev. William Compton, our assistant, and the Rev. Joseph Carson

presiding elder, with their party, have succeeded in excommunicating seven local preachers, (myself among the number,) at our late quarterly meeting. They had the policy to arrest us all at one time, that they might deprive us of each other's votes. They had the candor to acknowledge that they did not deal with us for any act of immorality, but for our adherence to the cause of reform; for we all refused to comply with their insulting and degrading terms, namely, to withdraw from the Union Society and cease to patronize the "Mutual Rights."

Our venerable brother Price, just before the sentence of excommunication was passed on him, addressed the president and the conference nearly in the following words: "I am seventy-four years old, have been a Methodist about fifty years. I was three years a soldier in the revolutionary war; and while a prisoner, a British officer offered me a great bribe to join the British and fight against my country, but I told him, if I had one hundred lives I would lose them all in fighting for my liberty and my country. I have considered well my situation, and am firm in my purpose. I shall not forsake the Union Society. I remember in your preaching yesterday you related an anecdote of two birds singing to each other: one sang, I love you, I love you; the other responded, show it, show it. Now if you love *me*, show it." The firmness of the old saint inspired us all with fresh courage to suffer in so righteous a course.

JAMES HUNTER.

What admiration this pathetic appeal must excite in the bosom of every lover of justice and of right! The old veteran, although past his three-score years and ten, and staggering under the pressing hand of time, his sun of life almost ready to dip its disc in the ocean of eternity, stands arraigned upon that soil (before a religious tribunal) for the liberty of which he had toiled, fought and suffered for three years. And, stranger still to relate, "the head and front of his offending" amounted to this, he had the independence, as a man, to think for himself, and the candor to give expression to the sentiments he had embraced, concerning the polity of the church, in a manner which he deemed perfectly consonant with his rights as a man and a Christian. He is found guilty of all this, and the aged minister of Christ is cast over the battlements of the church as unworthy of membership in it. And all this was done in Carolina, where the notes of American independence were first heard, and upon the very soil which had been consecrated by the blood of the martyrs of liberty.

Review the transactions which have just been recorded, and the principles which prompted and governed the same, and surely every candid reader will at once arrive at the conclusion that the polity of that church which could tolerate and practice such measures, stood in much need of reformation.

But the work which the Rev. Mr. Compton had before him was not yet done. Rev. Caswell Drake and Rev. R. Davidson, both belonged to the Roan-



oke Union Society, although, from their location at the extreme end of the circuit, they were but seldom able to attend its sittings. The former attended the trials of the seven local ministers at the Quarterly Conference, and defended them before that body. His principles and sentiments by that means became no longer ambiguous, and he was doomed to be placed upon the same category with the devoted seven. In a few days after the trials at Horeb, Rev. Mr. Compton arrived at Warrenton, at which place the two local preachers above mentioned held their membership in society, and called upon Rev. Mr. Davidson, who was the class-leader, and demanded the "class-paper," stating that he wished to make a *new* one. He received the paper containing the names of the members of the church, carried it away, appointed a *new class leader*, made out a new class-paper or list, containing the names of those who were members of the church, *leaving off* the names of the *two local preachers*. He also called together the trustees of the church at that place, (Rev. C. Drake excepted,) and introduced and secured the passage of a resolution prohibiting those two local ministers from officiating in any of their pulpits, upon the ground that they were no longer within the pale of the M. E. Church.

The above act may be comprehended in what is meant by the term, "scratch law." Who has ever read of such a mode of operation in ecclesiastical affairs? Perhaps none. By what rule or law were these ministers of Christ tried? By none at all;

no, not even the semblance of rule. No charges were made out, no citations given, no trials had, no rule of Discipline brought into requisition in the case; but by the ecclesiastical dictum of the Rev. William Compton, and the dash of his pen, these two members of the church of Christ are stripped of all ministerial functions and cast from the bosom of the church, without receiving even the semblance of a formal notice of the same. Where was the justice, where was the propriety of such a procedure as this? There was none. It was worse than arbitrary—it was *tyrannical in the extreme*. But the heart sickens to contemplate such transactions as these. Yet “justice should be done though the heavens fall.” It was such events as these which we have recorded that led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church.

The Rev. William Compton is presented before the mind of the reader in this work quite conspicuously; and the writer regrets that the position assigned him is one so unenviable; but truth required a faithful narrative, and the actions of the man are recorded. The writer adopts the sentiment of Bishop Burnett, that “whatever moderation or charity we owe to men’s persons, we owe none at all to their errors, and to that frame which is built on and supported by them.” Mr. Compton no doubt felt that his actions were prompted by correct motives at that time, although he inflicted such distress upon his Christian brethren. But he is no more—his race is run; and he has gone to the

presence of his Maker, and his actions have been weighed by the Judge of all the earth. The writer here takes pleasure in recording the fact that Rev. Mr. Compton remarked but a short time previous to his death, to a member of the M. P. Church, that "*his feelings had been greatly moderated and softened towards the reformers.*" Of that fact we believe none doubt.

About the time of the persecutions upon Roanoke, hostility began to manifest itself in different parts of North Carolina against the friends of mutual rights. On Albemarle Circuit in particular, which runs through the district of country lying on the south side of Albemarle Sound, several were ejected from the church without the semblance of a trial. The doctrines of mutual rights had been embraced by a few persons in that part of the country, and three local ministers, the Rev. Joshua Swift, Rev. Swain Swift, and Rev. H. Tackinton, were understood to be in favor of a reformation in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Rev. William W. Hill attended an appointment to preach in their immediate neighborhood, and as he was known to be an able and zealous advocate of the subject of reform, these three ministers requested him to say to their brethren and neighbors from the pulpit, after preaching, that "they were in favor of the doctrines of reform." The announcement was simply made, according to  
quest.

The preacher in charge of the circuit, Rev. J. D. Halstead, being at that time in a part of the circuit somewhat remote, learned the simple narrative of the announcement; and upon arriving at one of his appointments, about twelve miles from the place at which Rev. W. W. Hill had preached, proceeded to announce from the pulpit that these three ministers, against whose moral or official characters no charges had been alleged, were no longer ministers or members of the M. E. Church! What an outrage upon reason and upon rights; but more properly an outrage upon religion! The inquiry might arise, what was their offence, that they were thus summarily disposed of without form of trial? The only answer at hand is simply this, they had requested an announcement of the fact that "they were in favor of reform." And for that offence the Rev. J. D. Halstead proceeded to declare them out of the pale of the church. Comment is unnecessary. The simple narrative is sufficient to demonstrate the shameful impropriety of such an unrighteous act.

We may search in vain for any authority to justify the conduct of Rev. Messrs. Halstead and Compton, in thus expelling ministers of the gospel from the church without the form or semblance of a trial. The sacred Scriptures warrant no such procedure.

But the General Conference of May, 1828, had issued a pastoral address, signed by the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and certain

doctrines are therein laid down which these divines may have seized upon as a pretext for the exercise of such high-handed and tyrannical measures. The objectionable doctrines set forth in that famous address are contained in the following remarkable sentence :

“The great Head of the church himself has imposed on us the duty of preaching the gospel, of administering its ordinances, and of maintaining its moral discipline among those over whom the Holy Ghost, in these respects, has made us overseers. Of these also, viz: of gospel doctrines, ordinances, and moral discipline, we do believe that the divinely instituted ministry are the divinely authorized expounders; and that the duty of maintaining them in their purity, and of not permitting our ministration in these respects to be authoritatively controlled by others, does rest upon us with the force of a moral obligation.”

According to this celebrated manifesto, “the divinely instituted ministry are divinely authorized expounders” of discipline; consequently ample grounds are here afforded for the lovers of power and authority to expound the same as best suits their views of propriety or bias of mind. Indeed this startling declaration of the General Conference savors very much of the claims of infallibility set up by the church of Rome. It is flattering to the minds of ecclesiastical aspirants, and no doubt may, and does furnish such as presume to deviate from the common path of disciplinary regulations by the

allurements of ambitious feelings, with a pretext for their arbitrary measures. Taking every possible view of the case that is presented at the present period, we are forced to the conclusion that, in the adoption and promulgation of such doctrines and sentiments, the General Conference could have been influenced by no other motives than a desire to strengthen the hands of the itinerant ministry, and to impart to them a character of authority, whose prerogatives were not to be questioned by the local ministry and membership of the church.

Up to this period of our narrative, there had been eight lay members of the church expelled in Carolina, (including one who had been informally cut off on Albemarle,) on account of their opinions concerning church polity. They had been condemned and ejected from the church contrary to the known rules of that church; they had appealed to the Annual Conference, and likewise sent up charges to that body against Rev Benton Field, preacher in charge, for mal-administration. The conference decided "it was not mal-administration," and thereby closed the doors against their return. Again we find that *twelve ministers* had been cast out from the church—seven of whom were admitted to the *benefits* of a *mock-trial*, and five were disposed of by the process of the *scratch law*. To appeal to that conference which had sanctioned the measures of the Rev. Mr. Field, would have been useless; therefore no appeal was made but

to the community, to their friends, and to their God.

In the latter part of this year (1828) the friends of mutual rights in Lynchburg, Virginia, suffered persecution on account of their principles. Two local preachers and nine laymen were expelled from the church under the superintendency of the Rev. W. A. Smith; an act so manifestly unjust, and so void of all semblance of Christian charity, that it led to the withdrawal of about fifty members from the communion of the M. E. Church. The ladies, to the number of thirty-seven, following the laudable example set them by their sisters in Baltimore, addressed a letter to the preacher in charge, setting forth the reasons for taking such a step, and withdrew in a body from the church. We extract an account of these proceedings from the *Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer*.

LYNCHBURG, OCTOBER 18, 1828.

REV. D. B. DORSEY :

Dear Sir,—The most cogent arguments that can be advanced by the friends of reform, in support of the principles which they advocate, are feeble when compared with those demonstrative facts with which our opponents furnish us. The principles of the Methodist government had not been developed until within the past year. It began with you, and each subsequent move more clearly tends to hold them out to public view; and in proportion as they are felt and seen the cause of reform is

advanced. Such, I am happy to say, is the result in this place. In your last paper you noticed the meeting of the friends of reform in Lynchburg, and published their resolutions. Our proceedings were speedily followed by citations to answer before a committee for "endeavoring to sow dissensions in our church by inveighing against its Discipline." The specification, "because they constituted an inflammatory meeting, on the evening of the 18th of September, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, that adopted and published in the 'Lynchburg Virginian' a certain preamble and resolutions, signed C. Winfree, chairman, and John Victor, secretary, of an inflammatory character." This meeting was attended by a large number of our most respectable citizens; and in whatever point of view it might be regarded by our opposing brethren, we have the united testimony of a disinterested and intelligent public to sustain us in saying that it was conducted in an orderly, respectful and dignified manner. As to the character of the meeting, however, the committee did not express an opinion. The character and tendency of the preamble and resolutions were the ostensible ground on which they sustained the charge and specifications. And thus for the expression of ~~their~~ sentiments, on a subject of mere human policy and convenience, were two local preachers and nine lay members, stewards, leaders, and one exhorter cut off from the communion of the church. I hope you will publish the preamble, that an enlightened com-



munity may distinctly see the development of that principle in our government, and that policy of our irresponsible rulers, which are exerted to suppress the freedom of speech and the press, apart from its licentious use; for we humbly conceive that our sentiments in that paper are expressed in a calm, temperate and dignified manner. The decision of the committee was of course sustained by the Quarterly Meeting Conference.

Such has been the influence of these measures, that although we had considered our number but small, we now find that we are surrounded by a host of warm and fast friends of reform. The females assembled and addressed a letter to the preacher in charge, a copy of which I send you, marked A, signed by thirty-seven members. Since that there have been other secessions, male and female, so that we now number sixty-two members, who on the 13th inst. formed themselves into a society, adopting an article of association, and receiving the Rev. William J. Holcombe and John Percival as licensed preachers, appointed stewards and leaders, and formed three classes. A subscription paper was opened for the purpose of erecting a house of worship, and on this day upwards of two thousand dollars are subscribed for that purpose. In the meantime the houses of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Baptist denominations are open for our accommodation. Brother Holcombe preached on last Sabbath, at 11 o'clock, in the Baptist church; the Episcopalian will be

by us on next Sabbath at the same  
the Presbyterian at night. Our cause  
growing daily.

A number of our Methodist brethren are looking  
with anxiety to the convention; and should it be  
determined to establish an independent church,  
and the foundation be well laid, we calculate on a  
very large addition to our communion. May the  
great Head of the church inspire us with wisdom  
commensurate with this important business. Our  
meetings are well attended; much love and union  
prevail; and the members seem to enjoy the life  
and power of religion. We bear with patience  
the opposition and hard sayings of our opposing  
brethren; nor will we return railing for railing.

Yours, in much love and esteem,

J. VICTOR.

*Copy of the instrument of association under which the  
reformers united on the 13th of October, 1828.*

We, the undersigned, formerly members of the  
Methodist Episcopal Church in Lynchburg, some  
of whom have been expelled from the fellowship  
of that body, solely for our reform principles, and  
others who have withdrawn from that church, be-  
cause of our objection to its government, and the  
arbitrary and oppressive administration of its Dis-  
cipline, have agreed to unite together as a society  
of original Methodists. Our object is to form, in  
connection with reformers generally, a system of  
government in which the great principles of repre-

munity may distinctly see the development of that principle in our government, and that policy of our irresponsible rulers, which are exerted to suppress the freedom of speech and the press, apart from its licentious use; for we humbly conceive that our sentiments in that paper are expressed in a calm, temperate and dignified manner. The decision of the committee was of course sustained by the Quarterly Meeting Conference.

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occupied by us on next Sabbath at the same hour, and the Presbyterian at night. Our cause is advancing daily.

A number of our Methodist brethren are looking with anxiety to the convention; and should it be determined to establish an independent church, and the foundation be well laid, we calculate on a very large addition to our communion. May the great Head of the church inspire us with wisdom commensurate with this important business. Our meetings are well attended; much love and union prevail; and the members seem to enjoy the life and power of religion. We bear with patience the opposition and hard sayings of our opposing brethren; nor will we return railing for railing.

Yours, in much love and esteem,

J. VICTOR.

*Copy of the instrument of association under which the reformers united on the 13th of October, 1828.*

We, the undersigned, formerly members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lynchburg, some of whom have been expelled from the fellowship of that body, solely for our reform principles, and others who have withdrawn from that church, because of our objection to its government, and the arbitrary and oppressive administration of its Discipline, have agreed to unite together as a society of original Methodists. Our object is to form, in connection with reformers generally, a system of government in which the great principles of repre-

in rejecting proposals evidently so partial and unjust, and difficult to be complied with.

“Resolved 2. That we feel extremely gratified at that degree of peace and prosperity with which they appear to be at present favored, and we sincerely pray that it may be long continued.

“Resolved 3. That according to our present feelings and sentiments, we ought and do therefore design to patronize the ‘Mutual Rights,’ and to continue the Union Society until the meeting of the convention in November next, and then be governed as circumstances may seem to direct.

“Resolved 4. That in order to prevent unpleasant feelings, we will use our influence with the editors of the above named periodical not to insert in its pages any matter calculated to excite the effects above stated.

“Resolved 5. That it is our wish to promote peace and concord; and whatever we can safely surrender to our old side brethren, for peace and quietness’ sake, we feel disposed to do it. But the liberty of speech and of the press, with the right to assemble peaceably and orderly, to discuss church government or any other subject we may think proper to take up, is what we cannot relinquish to any human authority whatever.”

After the passage of the above resolutions, it was stated by some high in authority that the Cincinnati reformers had passed the Rubicon, and could no longer be tolerated.

On the 17th of July fourteen members of the

Union Society were waited on by a prosecuting committee of the following members: Christopher Smith, Robert Richardson, Sacker Nelson and Littleton Quinton.

On the 25th of July brother William Young, a local preacher, was served with charges, of which the following is a copy; and notified to appear for trial at the Stone church, at 9 o'clock on Friday, the 14th day of August.

"Rev. Wm. Young is charged with endeavoring to sow dissensions in the society or church, in this station or city, known by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and with the violation of that general rule of Discipline of said church which prohibits members from doing harm, and requires them to avoid evil of every kind; and especially with violating that clause of said general rule which prohibits speaking evil of ministers.

"Specification 1. Because the said Wm. Young, while a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, did heretofore attach himself to, and become a member of the society called the Union Society of the M. E. Church of Cincinnati; which Union Society is in opposition to the Discipline, in whole or in part, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and has arrayed and combined all the workings of the spirit of party in their pernicious and destructive forms, distinguishing its members as organized and systematic opponents of the church aforesaid.

"Specification 2. Because the said Wm. Young as a member of the said Union Society, directly

or indirectly, either by pecuniary contributions or his personal influence, aiding, abetting, co-operating or assisting in the publication or circulation of a work called 'The Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church,' printed in Baltimore, (for proof of which see 'Mutual Rights,' No. 44, page 230, 2d resolution;) which periodical work or publication called the 'Mutual Rights,' &c., contains among other things much that inveighs against the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, in whole or in part, and is in direct opposition thereto, and that is abusive or speaks evil of a part if not of most of the ministers of that church; the general tendency of which periodical work has been to produce and continues to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of said church in this city or station.

"Specification 3. Because the said Wm. Young, as a member of the Union Society aforesaid, did at a meeting of said society, held on the evening of the 10th of this month (July), vote for or otherwise agree to the adoption of the following resolution, viz: 'That according to our present feelings and sentiments, we ought and therefore design to patronize 'The Mutual Rights,' and to continue the Union Society until the meeting of the convention in November next, and then to be governed as circumstances may seem to direct;' which resolution, on account of the licentious manner in which the periodical called 'Mutual Rights' has been con-

ducted, and on account of the discord and strife produced by the organization and continuation of a distinct body, within the bosom of the church, called the Union Society, is a plain violation of the existing regulations under which we are voluntarily associated as Methodists and as Methodist ministers, and is in opposition to the judgment and advice of the late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is well calculated to produce and increase the disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union alluded to in the 3d specification. For proof of which the publication entitled the 'Mutual Rights of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church' is referred to, and particularly the following papers."

The papers here referred to are the same as those presented upon the trial of Dr. S. K. Jennings at Baltimore. From a careful comparison, the reader cannot doubt that the preceding charges and specifications were framed after the model or original invented by the prosecuting committee in Baltimore; therefore the same papers pressed into service in that city would answer the purpose in Cincinnati.

Upon the meeting of the Quarterly Meeting Conference, it was determined, in order to obviate existing difficulties, to appoint a committee to confer with a committee on the part of the Union Society. The committee were vested with authority in case of a failure to reconcile the difficulties, to devise a plan for a separation, and to report to the church



the result. Several communications passed between the two committees, but no terms were agreed upon. The friends of reform were willing to abolish their Union Society, but wished to reserve to themselves the right to assemble as members of the church, for the purpose of transacting such business as they might think proper, for the purpose of promoting the cause of reform in the M. E. Church. They likewise refused to withdraw their support from the "Mutual Rights" at present, and in case they did yield that, they wished to reserve to themselves the right to disseminate their sentiments through such a medium as they might see proper to select. The committee of the Quarterly Conference regarded such terms as altogether inadmissible, and the correspondence closed without any thing being effected.

A few days afterwards thirteen others were summoned to trial upon charges and specifications similar in every respect to those alleged against Rev. Mr. Young. Prosecutions having been thus commenced, involving principles, rights and interests of an important nature to every friend of religious liberty, the reformers resolved to make common cause in the coming contest.

After being summoned to attend trial, the following vote was sent to the preacher in charge, asking the privilege of trial before the society of which they were members, according to the provisions of the Discipline.

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 9, 1828.

WRIGHT :

er,—We have received the charges  
been preferred against us by brothers  
Hardson, Smith and Nelson.

now to ask for the privilege granted in  
line to an accused member, viz: the  
trial before the society of which we are

We would be glad if you would send  
over by the bearer.

MOSES LYON,

E. HALL.

the preceding note Mr. Wright saw proper  
to send the following reply.

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 9, 1828.

MR. LYON AND HALL :

in answer to your note, I need only say the privi-  
lege you ask for is utterly impracticable. Neither  
I nor myself have power to compel members to  
attend; so that, if such a course should be deter-  
mined on, nothing is more certain than that no  
investigation could be had in the case.

Yours, &amp;c.

J. F. WRIGHT.

The objection urged by Mr. Wright against  
granting the "disciplinary privilege," requested by  
Messrs. Lyon and Hall, is exceedingly strange.  
In the first place, it seemed to amount to a reflec-  
tion upon the membership of the church, virtually  
presuming a disregard, on their part, of the inter-  
est of the church. In the next place, it might be  
presumed that he regarded this rule passed by

the General Conference, as an impracticable one. Neither of which positions can be regarded as true. But the key to his objections was possibly this: he feared the decision of the matter before the society.

On Sunday, August the 10th, the ministers officiating in the different Methodist churches in Cincinnati, were requested to read notices from the pulpits inviting the attendance of the members at Stone church, on the following Wednesday, at which time and place business of importance would be brought before them.

This call upon the membership was made by the trustees for the purpose of obtaining an expression of their sentiments in regard to the proceedings which had been instituted. Some of the preachers refused to read the notices, and one recalled in the afternoon what he had published in the morning.

Although opposition to the meeting was thus offered, a considerable gathering of the members took place. The object of the meeting being stated, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

"1. That the trustees of this station have authority to call the church together on business in relation thereto, whenever they are of opinion such call is necessary, and all such calls we consider legal and valid.

"2. That at such meetings, whatever business is laid before the church, a majority shall decide thereon, and that decision shall be binding.

"3. That as these prosecutions most clearly

involve a violation of that sacred trust committed to us by our forefathers, viz: the liberty of speech and of the press, and as they are contrary to the spirit and genius of our holy religion, unacknowledged by our book of Discipline, and highly dangerous to our civil and religious liberties, we hereby express our entire disapprobation of such proceedings.

"4. That from any view we are able to take of these matters, the alleged grounds of complaint are totally insufficient to sustain the charges here preferred.

"5. That forasmuch as some of our accused brethren have required of the preacher in charge an investigation of these complaints before the church, and as the preacher in charge has denied that privilege, a privilege which is granted in the Discipline of said church, a right which, from the peculiar and uncommon nature of these charges, is imperiously called for, we hereby declare we shall acknowledge no expulsions as valid or legal where such right has been denied.

"6. That we respectfully submit to the preacher in charge, the propriety of immediately withdrawing these prosecutions, as the objects for which they were instituted can never be accomplished thereby.

"7. That should the preacher in charge reject our counsel and advice in relation to these prosecutions, we hereby authorize and command our brethren, the trustees of this station, to adopt such measures to enforce a compliance with our wishes, as above stated, as they may judge necessary.

"8. That a copy of the resolutions passed by the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this station, be presented, by the trustees of said church, to the Rev. John F. Wright, preacher in charge.

"9. That the trustees be required to have the resolutions passed by this meeting, recorded in the church book."

A copy of the preceding resolutions was presented to the Rev. Mr. Wright, accompanied by the following note:

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 13, 1828.

DEAR BROTHER,—We herewith send you a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, at a meeting held this day agreeably to public notice given by the trustees of this station. We request you to inform us by the bearer whether you design to act in accordance with the wishes of said church.

TRUSTEES.

REV. J. F. WRIGHT.

Mr. Wright replied in the following note:

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 14, 1828.

TO THE TRUSTEES,—In answer to your note, I beg leave to remark that, in my humble opinion, the trustees have exceeded the power vested in them by the law of incorporation, by taking jurisdiction over and interfering with the spiritual concerns of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this station, (as

trustees,) inasmuch as their office only contemplates their having control of temporal affairs.

You wish me to say whether I "design to act in accordance with the wishes of said church." To which I answer, from the smallness of the number convened together on yesterday, and as I am informed but few voted, I cannot suppose the wish of the church is yet ascertained. No regular investigation has yet been made, and I feel myself bound, as preacher in charge, to attend to the business as the Discipline of our church directs.

Yours, &c.

J. F. WRIGHT.

On the 14th of August the trials of the local preachers came on. There were four of them, viz: David English, J. B. Dorman, J. Haughton, and William Young. The committee appointed to sit on the trials consisted of Daniel Duvall, J. Walls, and John Clark. The accused brethren urged objections against each one of them. Mr. Clark was a man whose rabid opposition to the cause of reform rendered him particularly objectionable, but all objections were overruled.

As various articles published in the "Mutual Rights," had been relied upon by the prosecuting committee to sustain the charges, they proceeded to read, as evidence, items of different articles from that work. The accused brethren objected to the proceedings in this respect, and insisted that the whole of each article should be read, in order that the true meaning and understanding of each essay

might be had. To this objections were made, on the ground that it would occupy too much time. Late in the afternoon the evidence closed on the part of the prosecution. Three of the accused ministers then addressed the committee in their defence. They urged the impropriety of being held responsible for the written sentiments of other men, and those men, too, itinerant ministers, members of Annual Conferences, responsible to the same, and within the reach and control of the rules of the church. They also took the grounds that the question at issue was neither of a personal nor private character, and consequently could not be decided, with any degree of propriety, by such church prosecutions; that neither Union Societies, nor such periodicals on church polity as the *Mutual Rights*, were condemned by the word of God, or forbidden in the Discipline of the church of which they were members.

They retired for the night, and on the following day pronounced the accused ministers guilty of the charges which had been preferred against them; consequently they were suspended from all ministerial functions until the sitting of the Quarterly Conference.

August 15th the trial of the ten lay members came on. Upon the opening of the trial, the accused brethren arose, and one of their number, as spokesman, read the following paper:

"As accused members of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Cincinnati, we claim the privileges

granted us in the fifth restrictive rule of the Discipline of our church, in the following words, to wit: 'Neither shall they (the General Conference) do away the privileges of our members, of trial before the society or by committee, and of an appeal.'

"We do, therefore, protest against being tried before a committee or select number of said church contrary to our wishes or consent; and we do hereby notify you that we will not submit to any decision in our cases, unless such decision shall be made by the society of which we are members.

"Signed, E. Hall, W. L. Chappell, H. Handy, S. Ashley, T. Wright, James Foster, M. Lyon, J. Snyder, J. Garretson, G. Lee."

The disciplinary privilege claimed by the accused, was disallowed by Rev. Mr. Wright, and they immediately withdrew from the house. The trials proceeded, and the ten brethren were all found guilty of the charges and specifications, and in a few days the preacher in charge sent the following note of admonition to each one. The copy is taken from that sent to Mr. Hall.

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 18, 1828.

BROTHER HALL,—I take this method of discharging the painful duty of administering reproof, which devolves on me on account of my present situation. You have been convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in the society or church of which you are a member, by a decision of the committee appointed to investigate the charges preferred against you.



You therefore plainly discover that the only ground on which expulsion from the church can be avoided, is an abandonment of the course which you have for some time past pursued, and which, according to the judgment of your brethren of the committee, is calculated to produce disagreement, strife, contention and breach of union among the members of our church.

As you are the arbiter of your own destiny in this matter, I hope you will inform me in writing, by Wednesday evening next, if you should feel disposed to comply with the above condition.

Yours, &c.

JOHN F. WRIGHT.

While the prosecutions were thus pending, the reformers, feeling deeply interested in the issue, held consultations together as to the proper course to be pursued under the circumstances. They were informed by the best of legal authority that according to the civil law they could compel Mr. Wright to grant the lay members the privilege of a trial before the society; or, in case of a refusal on his part, commit him to jail by a writ of *mandamus*. Reports were likewise in circulation that another catalogue of names of the members of the Union Society, to the number of about thirty, had been made in view of prosecution. The trustees embraced the opinion that some prompt step should be taken in order to arrest the tide of prosecution; and after much consultation and interchange of views one with another, they recommended that

“forasmuch as no peace can be enjoyed in the church, reformers in a body had better withdraw.” An appointment was therefore made for the ‘reformers and their friends to meet at the Stone church, at 2 o’clock on Monday, 18th of August, for the purpose of formally withdrawing from the church. At the hour appointed a considerable concourse had assembled, and the meeting had been opened in due form; and its object being stated, about two hundred and forty gave in their names, thereby formally withdrawing from the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the following letter, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Wright, their reasons for taking this step are fairly and candidly stated :

*Letter to Rev. J. F. Wright from the seceding members  
of the M. E. Church of Cincinnati.*

SIR,—We have beheld with unfeigned sorrow and regret the proceedings lately had against our brethren, by way of distinction called reformers, in this city. These proceedings, we are compelled to say, are distinguished by cruelty and oppression in their most afflicting forms. You, sir, are not ignorant that the church in this station expressed, at a public meeting called by the trustees for that purpose, their entire disapprobation of these prosecuting measures. You have also been advised not to proceed, and forewarned of the awful consequences, by brethren whose judgment it was your duty to respect. Nevertheless, led on and assisted

by a set of men, some of whom are remarkable for their ignorance, others for their deep-rooted prejudices, and some by tempers of the most inflammatory character, you have summoned a number of our brethren before a partial tribunal, prepared to do the direful deed ; and thus by the most unjustifiable measures you have procured the condemnation of our brethren, whose characters stand fair before both the church and the world. In these proceedings you must be aware you can neither be sustained by the Discipline of our church nor by the laws of our country. By an appeal to that tribunal we can compel you to accede to the reasonable request of our brethren. Alas! we lament to prove that civil law alone will induce any Methodist preacher to accede to what religion and justice require. Oh! "tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon," lest the uncircumcised, the enemies of Christianity, triumph. But unwilling to avail ourselves of the advantages we thus possess, we have determined to secede, and leave our brethren in the quiet possession of our sanctuary, our home, for peace and quietness' sake, and seek a place where a watchful Providence shall direct our way. We therefore request of you, forthwith, certificates of our good standing and character ; and pray that you and your associates in these unhalloed prosecutions may find mercy in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Cincinnati, August 18, 1828.



## THE LOCAL MINISTERS.

The court which had been convened to try them had no authority further than to suspend them from the exercise of ministerial functions, therefore their several cases came up properly before the ensuing Quarterly Conference. By the time this body met, owing to secessions, removals from office, &c., the friends of reform were in the minority. Before a tribunal composed almost entirely of the supporters of arbitrary power, many of them being the official creatures of the preacher in charge, no other decision could have been looked for than that which was rendered, viz: a confirmation of the verdict rendered by the committee—consequently the local ministers were all expelled from the church.

However, the Quarterly Conference, willing to put on the semblance of lenity, proposed terms to the expelled, in the form of a resolution, upon which they might still retain their standing in the church; those terms being such as no reasonable man could believe that they, under all the circumstances, would for a moment entertain—the conditions thus offered requiring them to withdraw from the Union Society, and to cease to patronize the “Mutual Rights.” Such conditions had no charms for the expelled.

The following official notice was sent to the local ministers, containing the decision of the Quarterly Conference in their cases :

DEAR BROTHER,—The conference have made it my duty to inform you of their decision. They

have found you guilty of the charge, with its several specifications; and have passed a resolution that if you promise to desist from the course in future for which they censure you, viz: that you withdraw from the Union Society, and that you cease to patronize the "Mutual Rights," that you retain your standing in the church.

Yours, affectionately,

G. R. JONES, *President.*

REV. W. YOUNG.

To the above note the Rev. Mr. Young sent the following reply:

DEAR BROTHER,—As it respects the decision of the conference in my case, which you gave me last evening, which informed me that they considered me guilty of the charges preferred against me, I expected nothing else, from a belief that the committee of local preachers and a majority of the Quarterly Conference were selected with an eye to this decision.

Concerning the proposition made to me by the conference, viz: to withdraw from the Union Society, and cease to patronize the "Mutual Rights," I have only to say, I shall reserve to myself the right to patronize and read such books as my judgment shall from time to time direct; and for the matter contained therein I shall endeavor at all times to pass judgment with a reference to the rule of right. I shall continue to think it a right belonging to me to converse with my brethren, in

society meetings or otherwise, on the subject of church government or any other lawful subject.

I have now to say that I consider the proceedings in my case to be illegal, and the decision to be unjust, and from it I shall appeal to the Annual Conference. I remain yours, &c.

WILLIAM YOUNG.

The four local ministers took an appeal to the ensuing Annual Conference, but, as might have been expected, that body confirmed the decision of the court below. The brethren who had seceded from the church were now destitute of a place of worship, but were very kindly accommodated by being tendered the use of the Second Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. Verily they were enabled to adopt the language of the psalmist and say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."


They were regularly supplied with the ministration of the word by Rev. Messrs. Bishop, Price, and others. And now we have to record an act at which the feelings of every Christian, in whose heart the spirit of the Redeemer dwells, must revolt. The preaching of the gospel of Christ to the brethren who had seceded, by the Rev. Mr. Bishop, gave offence to the presiding elder, who notified him that he should institute charges against him at the approaching Annual Conference for such conduct. This man in high authority was prompt to redeem his word. Charges were presented to conference,

but that body decided that they were not just grounds of complaint against the Rev. Mr. Bishop. But they requested him by vote not to preach the gospel of Christ to those persons in Cincinnati who had seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church on account of the prosecutions which had been instituted there.

In this vote of the Annual Conference the Rev. Mr. Bishop felt himself as it were trammelled in the exercise of his ministerial functions, and that this request of the Annual Conference might in its tendency prove to be a snare to entrap him. Comment upon the unreasonableness and injustice of such a requisition is unnecessary. He saw proper, under the circumstances, to retire from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and take charge of the society of those who had seceded. The following letter, addressed to the preacher in charge, defines his position with great clearness and force as a Christian minister :

REV. J. F. WRIGHT :

Dear Brother,—After much reflection, many tears and many prayers to Almighty God for direction, I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. And I do hereby tender to you, and through you to bro. G. R. Jones, as the proper organs, a resignation of my membership in said church, and shall from this date consider myself no longer accountable to the discipline and authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church.



It was not my design or wish ever to dissolve my connexion with a church for whose welfare I have felt a deep interest, and have labored to the best of my ability for thirty years; but I expected to live and die within her pale. But the vote of the conference, prohibiting me from preaching to the seceded brethren in this city, imposes a requisition with which I cannot comply as a conscientious man, and it involves a principle I cannot admit. I never can subscribe to the right of any man or body of men authoritatively to say to any minister called of God to preach the gospel to dying men, you must not preach to any congregation of immortal souls who are probationers or candidates for eternal happiness or woe. I must be at liberty to follow the dictates of my own conscience in fulfilling the commission given to me by the great Head of the church, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" because I know I must give an account to Him for myself in the great day. I believe it is the will of God that I should preach to those seceders in this city, but the conference forbids it; for although the vote was in the form of a request, yet it being a formal vote of the conference, and made a matter of record on the journals, it amounts to an official prohibition; so that I am driven to the necessity of withdrawing from the church, or violating my conscience. And whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye. In this matter I am not left to choose as in a matter of judgment, but of conscience. Hence, my



brethren have compelled me to resign my standing in the church, which I suppose is what some of them designed to accomplish; and it may be pleasure to them, but it is painful to me. It is to my wounded soul like cutting off a right arm, or plucking out a right eye.

But from a conviction of duty I must do it. I do not take this step from any hostile feeling, or from the dictates of any unhallowed passion; my feelings are of a very different nature. No one circumstance of my life has ever caused me more heartfelt grief than that in which the conference has placed me by the above act. I am frequently led involuntarily to exclaim, why did my brethren do so? Surely if they had known the tortures they were about to inflict on my already lacerated and bleeding heart, they would not have done it. Although the church has had many much more able ministers, a truer or more sincere friend she never had within her pale.

I have been in that church, I may say, from childhood, but I now go out like the old servant of God, not knowing whither he went. But I lean on the divine arm, and trust the Lord will lead and support me.

Contrary to my former calculations or intentions, I now retire from under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (which is near and dear to me,) for the reason already stated, that the command of the conference and the command of Jesus Christ given to me, stand in direct opposition to

each other. Christ says, preach the gospel to every creature. The conference says, preach not the gospel to those hundreds of souls in Cincinnati who have seceded from the church. So that I cannot obey one without violating the other. And if I disobey the command of the conference, in obeying the command of Christ, I subject myself to trial, suspension and expulsion, which I have reason to believe would be carried into execution; and I do not wish any further affliction of this kind. And if I disobey the command of Christ, in obeying the command of the conference, I shall endanger my eternal salvation.

Under these circumstances, I dare not confer with flesh and blood; I must, therefore, stand free to obey the great Head of the church, and leave the event with him. Yours in deep affliction,\*

T. BISHOP.

The General Convention of reformers which met in Baltimore in November, 1827, appointed a committee for the purpose of calling another convention, to meet at such time as they might designate, if in their opinion the general interests and object of the Methodist reformers required it. That committee met in Baltimore, July, 1828, and taking into consideration the action of the late General Conference

\* See "An exposition of facts connected with the late prosecutions in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Cincinnati," &c., printed in 1828; a copy of which has been politely furnished the author by bro. Conclin of that city.

upon the memorials and petitions of the friends of reform; and regarding as highly exceptionable the terms proposed for the return of those who had been expelled for being in connection with Union Societies, circulating or patronizing the "Mutual Rights," &c., determined upon calling another convention.

They stated in their address that "the committee wish it to be understood, however, that they in no case advise a separation from the church, until the sentiments of the reformers generally can be known, through their respective representatives in the contemplated convention.

"In conformity to the trust reposed in us by the convention, for the reasons above stated, we hereby give notice that another general convention will be held in the city of Baltimore, in St. John's church, Liberty street, to begin its session on Wednesday, the 12th day of November next, at 10 o'clock, A. M."

## CHAPTER VIII.

**General Convention of 1828.**—Articles of Association adopted by the Convention.—Adoption of the Articles of Association by the Reformers generally.—Persecution of Reformers in Virginia.—Progress of Reform during 1829.—Letters and Reports from the agents appointed by the Convention.—Letters from Rev. G. Brown.—Extract of a letter from Rev. A. McCaine.

THE General Convention which met in the city of Baltimore, in November, 1828, was composed of delegates from the States of Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Alabama, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia.

Upon the organization of the Convention, the Rev. Nicholas Snethen was elected president, and William S. Stockton was appointed secretary.

The first business to which the convention proceeded, was to take up and consider the reply of the late General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the memorial of the Convention of Reformers of 1827. A committee of the following brethren were appointed to prepare an answer to that celebrated document, viz: Gideon Davis, D. C.; Dr. Thomas Dunn, Philadelphia; James Towler, Ohio; P. B. Hopper, Maryland; Dr. John French, Virginia.

The review which this committee reported of the reply of the General Conference to the memorials,

is an able document, which clearly refutes the arguments and positions taken by the General Conference, and is worthy of a perusal by all inquirers after truth. But owing to its length we are constrained to omit it in the plan of this work.

A committee was also appointed to prepare and report to the convention, a system of rules for the government of those reformers who might be disposed to associate together in an independent church organization. The committee was composed of Rev. S. K. Jennings, Baltimore; Rev. W. H. Co-mann, Virginia; Rev. W. B. Elgin, Tennessee; Rev. Wm. Young, Ohio; Rev. N. Snethen, Maryland; Mr. William L. Stockton, Philadelphia; Mr. Wm. C. Lipscomb, D. C.; Spier Whitaker, Esq., North Carolina; Mr. John Victor, Lynchburg, Va.

On Tuesday, the 18th November, the following preamble and resolution were offered by Mr. G. Davis, and adopted by the convention:

“Whereas certain resolutions were passed by the last General Conference with a professed design to restore to the communion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, certain persons who had been excluded from said communion, on account of their belonging to Union Societies and for patronizing the Mutual Rights; and whereas certain Methodist reformers in the city of Baltimore and elsewhere, who were interdicted said communion, and for whose restoration said resolutions were professedly adopted, have refused to accept the terms therein contained: therefore,

"Resolved, That this convention consider the terms of said resolutions to be such as they could not accept and retain an honorable and Christian standing among their brethren; and that they approve of their course in this respect, as a favorable illustration of their adherence to just principles, equally honorable to themselves and the cause in which they have suffered."

The committee upon organization presented their report, which was taken up, read, and ordered to be printed for the use of the convention.

After various substitutes and amendments had been acted upon, Mr. John Victor offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

"Resolved, That the several papers, together with the printed report of the committee on organization, be referred to a select committee, with directions to collate the same and report thereon as soon as practicable."

The following were appointed said committee: Rev. J. R. Horne, Rev. A. McCaine, Rev. S. K. Jennings, Rev. J. R. Williams and Mr. G. Davis, who reported through their chairman, Rev. J. R. Horne, which report being taken up and acted upon, article by article, was amended and finally adopted in the following form:

#### PREAMBLE.

Whereas the friends of a fair and equal representation in the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when they have insisted on the

necessity of a modification in the polity of the church, which should recognize this fundamental principle, the only safeguard to the liberties of the people, and when they have submitted respectful petitions and memorials to the General Conference, praying for the admission of the principle, have been met in the manner which has encouraged and prepared the friends of absolute power to request and urge them to withdraw from the fellowship of the church, and to threaten them with excommunication if they should refuse to comply:

And whereas many of our highly esteemed and useful members in the church, by an unjustifiable violence, have been excluded from the fellowship of their brethren, and have been thereby compelled for the time being to form themselves into religious fraternities for the purposes of Christian fellowship:

And whereas all the Methodists of the United States, and perhaps of the world, have been united together in their visible fellowship under the general rules of Mr. Wesley, which express the only condition and legitimate test of membership:

And whereas, in violation of good faith and brotherly love by an exercise of power not authorized by the word of God, other tests have been set up for the support of that violence, by which many valuable brethren have been unlawfully excluded as aforesaid:

And whereas these measures have been so conducted, that we are justified in believing it to have been the intention of the General Conference and

the anti-reformers under their influence, to punish all the avowed friends of representation and intimidate any who may feel inclined to favor that principle:

And whereas the late decisions of the Baltimore and Ohio Annual Conferences, as also the ultimate proceedings and report of the General Conference in relation to this subject, have placed every friend of representation in the Methodist Episcopal Church in such a situation that their opponents have it completely in their power to compel them to renounce their principles, or be excluded from the fellowship of their brethren:

And whereas the ministers favorable to the principles of representation, in sundry places, are no longer admitted to ordination or to occupy the pulpits of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to the great grievance of many:

And whereas the opposers of representation appear to show no concern for the spiritual welfare of those whom they have excluded as aforesaid, or of those who, on account of such exclusions, have considered themselves called on to withdraw out of the reach of their violent measures, but hold them up to public view as evil-minded persons, and prophesy evil things concerning them, notwithstanding the fact that those who have the best means of knowing the injured brethren have unabated confidence in their moral and religious integrity, and in common with all the admirers of steady adherents to principle, do actually applaud their firmness in



holding fast the principle of representation, although by so doing they have been subjected to such heavy pains and penalties:

And whereas the report of the General Conference above referred to, not only has sanctioned their unjust proceedings, but in effect asserted a divine right to continue to legislate and administer the government of the church in this oppressive manner:

Therefore, we, the delegates of the friends of a **REPRESENTATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT** in the Methodist Episcopal Church, elected and appointed by them to meet in convention in the city of Baltimore, in November, 1828, with a due regard to the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty as recognized by the Constitution of the United States, and the several States of the Union, in common with other Protestant churches, do in behalf of ourselves, our constituents and our posterity; in the fear of God, **SOLEMNLY PROTEST** against the right of the General Conference to assume such power, or to institute or sustain any such violent proceedings to which it necessarily leads. And we do hereby acknowledge and sustain the right of those brethren who have been excluded, and of those who have on their account withdrawn as aforesaid, to unite and form themselves into communities; and we do this the more willingly, because in so doing they will now of necessity meet the demand which has been so often made by their opponents, to exhibit a plan explanatory of the changes which they

desire, and what they intend to avoid until driven to it by necessity, to demonstrate by its practical operations the expediency of a representative Methodist Church government; and do therefore adopt the following articles of association for the government of such societies as shall agree thereto, under the appellation of *Associated Methodist Churches*.

#### ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION.

**ARTICLE I.** The articles of religion, general rules, means of grace, moral discipline, rites and ceremonies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are hereby declared to be the rules of faith and practice for those societies which may unite in this association; and the mode of administering the same is hereby adopted, except when contravened by some other article.

**ART. II.** Each society or church shall have the sole power to admit serious persons into full membership, and to regulate its own temporal concerns in accordance with these articles. The stewards to be elected by the male members over the age of twenty-one years, and the leaders by the respective classes.

**ART. III.** The right of property is declared to be vested in the respective societies or churches, who shall elect trustees for the purpose of holding the same for their benefit.

**ART. IV.** The trial of members shall be conducted according to the seventh section of the second chapter of the Discipline of the Methodist Episco-

pal Church; provided, however, that nothing therein contained shall be so construed as to deprive an accused member of the right to challenge; and provided, further, that the accused shall have a right to appeal from the decision of the committee to the next Quarterly Conference; and no member of that Conference who shall have sat on any case as a committee-man, shall be permitted to vote on the appeal.

ART. V. There shall be a Quarterly Conference in each station and circuit, composed of all the ordained and licensed preachers and exhorters belonging thereto, and of all the stewards and leaders. The preacher in charge shall be the president of the conference. The conference shall elect its own secretary. The business of the Quarterly Conference shall be, first, to inquire into the official and religious character of its members; secondly, to license exhorters and suitable persons to preach the gospel, and to recommend to the Annual Conference preachers for ordination or to travel. They shall also hear and decide upon appeals from committees.

ART. VI. There shall be in each State, as soon as may be, one, or not exceeding two, Annual Conferences, to be composed of all the ordained ministers and an equal number of lay delegates. But until such time, conferences may be formed when it shall be most convenient. The lay delegates to the Annual Conferences shall be chosen by the licensed preachers and lay male members over the

**of** twenty-one years, at the Quarterly Meetings  
preceding the sitting of the Annual Con-  
ferences.

**ART. VII.** Each Annual Conference shall elect a President and secretary.

**ART. VIII.** Each Annual Conference shall provide the mode of stationing its own preachers.

**ART. IX.** It shall be the duty of the presidents of the Annual Conferences to travel through their respective bounds, to fill vacancies, and to make such changes in the circuits or stations as may be deemed absolutely necessary. The president shall have the right of the pulpit in whatever place he may be, but shall not supersede the prerogatives of the minister in charge.

**ART. X.** Each Annual Conference shall have power to make such rules and regulations for its own government, and the government of the stations and circuits within its bounds, as may be necessary for the promotion of the spiritual interests of the community; provided, nevertheless, that no rule shall be binding on the preachers or people, which shall contravene the provisions of these articles.

**ART. XI.** Each Annual Conference shall have power to receive into the itinerancy and to ordain such preachers as may be recommended to that body by the Quarterly Conference. The president, assisted by two or more elders, shall perform the ordination.

**ART. XII.** The Annual Conferences shall fix the times and places of their sittings.

**ART. XIII.** Every person whose name is entered on the list of traveling preachers, shall be subject to the appointment of the conference and receive the same allowance as is provided in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

**ART. XIV.** It shall be the duty of the preacher in charge of any station or circuit, as soon as practicable after his arrival in his circuit or station, to assemble the Quarterly Meeting Conference, that he may obtain the necessary information for the proper understanding of the condition of the circuit or station, and for enlisting all the helps within its limits, for carrying on the great work of the Lord.

**ART. XV.** Nothing contained in these articles is to be so construed as to interfere with the right of property belonging to any member of this association, as recognized by the laws of the State within the limits of which the member may reside.

**ART. XVI.** There shall be a General Convention, to be held in the city of Baltimore on the first Tuesday in November, 1830, to be composed of an equal number of ministers and lay representatives chosen by the Annual Conferences respectively.

**ART. XVII.** Supernumerary and superannuated ministers shall be entitled to the same amount of support which is allowed to those more effective. And if any circuit or station should be willing to support any one or more of such supernumerary or superannuated ministers for any indefinite number of years, the privilege shall be granted them.

The convention, in order to carry out its objects more effectually, passed several resolutions, among which are the following:

“Resolved, That agents be appointed with full powers to travel through the different States, and assist in carrying into effect the articles adopted by this convention, and employ such other persons to aid them as they may deem proper.

“Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to prepare a Constitution, a Book of Discipline, and a Hymn Book, to be submitted to the convention to be held on the first Tuesday in November, 1830, in the city of Baltimore. In order to carry out the provisions of this resolution, the following brethren were appointed to constitute the committee, viz: Rev. James R. Williams, Rev. A. McCaine, Rev. S. K. Jennings, Mr. Gideon Davis and Mr. John J. Harrod.

“Resolved, that it is the opinion of the convention that elders and deacons who have been or may be deprived of their offices in the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of reform, sustain the same characters and offices in the Associated Methodist Churches as they did in the Methodist Episcopal Church.”

The convention also adopted a form of deed to secure to the use of individual societies the church property intended for the use of the Associated Methodist Churches.

It was just cause of gratulation to the friends of mutual rights that the convention were enabled to

adopt these articles of association, as the expelled and the withdrawn from the M. E. Church could unite under them in church union and fellowship; and as they pointed forward to better things to come, they were hailed and received as the harbinger of prosperity. These articles of association were adopted with great unanimity by the friends of reform throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The powers that be of the Methodist Episcopal Church now, for the first time, began to see that "the ashes of the martyrs are the seed of the church," and that the unjust persecutions which they had waged against the friends of reform were building up a new and distinct ecclesiastical organization, professing the same doctrines and observing the same means of grace with themselves. The hand of persecution, which had been busy, was not stayed. The epithets of "backsliders," "apostates," "malicious persons," "radicals," and "disorganizers," were generally applied to the advocates of reform, and frequently too by those who professed to be the "divinely authorized expounders of gospel doctrines and moral discipline." Many of them seemed to be fully persuaded that the reformers were amongst the most wicked and impenitent throughout the land. To sustain this assertion, we shall relate an anecdote that came under our own observation. During the excitement upon the subject of reform in Carolina, the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church held a camp-meeting in a part

of the country where the principles of mutual rights were taking root. One of the divinely authorized (no doubt thinking he was doing God service) took it into his head during his sermon at this meeting to hold up to his audience the characters of the reformers in a most appalling light, and closed his phillipic in the following remarkable words: "*For we do believe that if these reformers do not reform, they will never see the face of their God in peace.*"

The very favorable reception which the conventional articles of association met aroused to action the spirit of proscription in quarters where it had heretofore lain dormant. Soon after the rise of the convention the spirit of persecution began to rage violently in Virginia, in Northumberland county, and in Lynchburg, in that State, in Georgetown, D. C., in North Carolina, and in other parts of the Union.

We will here copy an article from the columns of the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," of February 20th, 1829, showing the manner in which the Rev. Benedict Burgess and others were disposed of by the authorities of the M. E. Church:

"BROTHER DORSEY,—I am not fond of writing, but on the present occasion it becomes my duty to give you, as far as I am able, an account of proceedings against reformers in this county. In doing this I am determined to extenuate nothing, nor to set down aught in malice; if I err, it shall not be intentional; and correction of an error will be acknowledged by me with cheerfulness.



“We live in Northumberland county, State of Virginia, which forms a part of what is called Lancaster Circuit, in which we were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This circuit I traveled in the years 1809 and 1810. From that time I have remained here in a local relation to said church, doing my best to promote the Redeemer's kingdom.

“Soon after my return from the convention held in Baltimore, in November last, I received a letter from the Rev. Samuel Clarke, preacher in charge of Lancaster Circuit, addressed to Benedict Burgess, Thomas Berry, John Lansdell, and others, requesting information, in the following words: ‘Do you, or do you not, consider yourselves members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and hold yourselves amenable to its laws? or do you consider yourselves members of another society? I wish you to give me a definite answer to these lines.’ For myself, I could have sent him an answer, (but not for *others*,) that I did consider myself a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The ensuing Sabbath I preached at Fairfield's meeting-house, and informed the congregation I thought *that* the last time I should address them as a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, concluding in my own mind that the letter was sent preparatory to a trial. After the congregation was dismissed, and the society retained, I rose and observed that I had received the above letter, and not knowing the minds of all to whom it was ad-

dressed, I thought it my duty to read it to them. After reading the letter, I told them the course I meant to pursue, and asked their concurrence, to which all appeared to agree. The press of business prevented me from accomplishing my purpose of seeing brother Clarke the next week; and on the Sunday following, which was the 21st of December last, I went to meeting and found him in the pulpit. He preached from Genesis xiii, 8 and 9: 'And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take to the left hand, then I will take to the right; or if thou wilt take to the right hand, then I will go to the left.' I thought I saw a great discrepance between the spirit of Abraham and our preacher. This might have been owing to the excitement under which he labored. The fatal consequences of Lot's choice were largely descanted upon. After sermon the Rev. T. C. Thornton detained the people by a short exhortation, while, as I suppose, preparations were making. After he sat down brother Clarke again resumed the stand, and, as nearly as I can now recollect, addressed the congregation in the following words: 'I am for peace; I serve the God of peace. It is well known that there is and has been strife in the Methodist Episcopal Church, not on doctrines, but on church government. There has lately been a convention in Baltimore, and

those who went and those who sent delegates to that convention have joined another church by that act. Therefore the following names are to be considered as having withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church.' Eight or ten names were then read out. I arose to address the congregation from the altar, when the people were dismissed and requested to withdraw, in order to hold a class-meeting. After the doors were closed, I requested of brother Clarke liberty to speak, and had it granted if I would not be long. I told the society I protested against the course that had been pursued; that my going to the convention was for the purpose of consolidating those brethren who had been expelled, and to provide an asylum for myself and others who might be expelled for maintaining the principle of righteousness in representation; that I rejoiced in having had the privilege of attending the convention, and thought it one of the best acts of my life.

"After considerable altercation, I told brother Clarke that it was probable he had not read out enough, and he had better ask if there were any more. He did so, and a number more arose and observed they were equally guilty (if there was any guilt in the act) with myself and those other brethren who had been read out. In the confusion that ensued, there was no appointment made for Christmas day, and of course there could have been no general notice given. As far as it could be done, there was notice that on that day I would preach,

proceed to form an Associated Methodist at Fairfield's. Although the eight or ten which were read out were in various parts of the circuit, and the Rev. T. C. Thornton attended the meeting on Christmas, and used his best efforts to prevent, as I thought, our organization, (this he denied as being his object,) there were enough united themselves under the conventional articles to prove that all were not read out who believed the government of Episcopal Methodism and despotism to be the same thing. We set down twenty-one names; elected brother Thomas Berry our class-leader, and John Lansdell our steward; appointed two prayer-meetings in the week, and a day of fasting and prayer. Since then we have been on the increase, and the blessing of God appears to attend our efforts to promote the Redeemer's kingdom. Last Saturday was Quarterly Meeting day for the circuit; and the Quarterly Conference, purged and purified as it was, sanctioned all that had been done, and directed their proceedings to be published.

"I am now acting under the conventional articles, and shall do my best, as soon as I can, to enlarge the work and spread the principles. We are in want of a man of experience and heartfelt religion to take charge of the executive department of the churches that are springing up in this section.

"Yours, in the bonds of mutual rights,

"B. BURGESS."

The organization of the friends of reform into churches and societies under the conventional articles, marks a new era in the history of reform. Up to this period there was no point to which the expelled and proscribed could look for relief upon being cast out from the pales of the M. E. Church; but a brighter day had now dawned, and associated Methodist Churches were being organized throughout the length and breadth of the land. The gales of prosperity wafted onward the cause, and success attended the efforts of those ministers who labored to propagate the doctrines of mutual rights. The agents appointed by the convention under its first resolution, "to travel through the different states," were of eminent service to the cause in organizing and building up churches, although they were invariably opposed in their operations by the supporters of clerical domination.

Their reports are highly interesting. We subjoin a few extracts from the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer."

*From the Rev. Dr. J. French, one of the agents for  
Virginia.*

NORFOLK, JANUARY 30, 1829.

DEAR BROTHER,—Societies have been formed under the conventional articles at the following places on this part of the seaboard of the state, viz: Princess Anne court house, (this society was formed 30th Nov.;) Cowlings' meeting house, Nansemond county; Smithfield and Bethel, Isle of

Wight county; Hampton and Fox Hill, Elizabeth city county; and Old Point. Yesterday I received a letter from the Rev. Miles King, of Mathews county, in which he stated that he had formed a society there.

I have several appointments out, commencing at Suffolk to-morrow evening, at all of which I expect to form societies. I have not learned what is doing in other parts of the state. We shall get on but slowly during the winter. But by the blessing of a good Providence I hope we shall move on rapidly when the spring opens upon us. The prospect exceeds my expectation. Faithful preaching and holy living, with the due enforcement of the moral discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which is recognized by our first conventional article, will bear down every thing before us. My method is, to insist on every person examining the matter in dispute, so as to understand it, and then follow the honest convictions of his own mind; and that, which ever side he may take, he is bound to cultivate kind feelings toward those who differ from him in opinion. I insist upon the possibility ~~and~~ necessity of our living in peace and brotherly love, whilst we differ in opinion. How much of the religion of Christ can dwell in any other bosom than that which entertains this holy principle? But alas! our opposing brethren, blinded by passion as it would seem, appear determined to give no quarters. But "let ~~us~~ know our calling better" than to "return railing for railing." Our holy religion imperiously requires

that we should be loving and kind to all men. Jesus Christ has set us this example, nor are we at liberty to depart from it. If we do, we shall be in danger of eternal fire. For the want of a house, nothing has been done in this place. In the spring we expect to commence building one. We have, however, procured a large room, and on Wednesday, the 18th Feb., we intend to have a meeting and form a society. I hope to be able to return home by that time.

I think we shall do pretty well here. Since I have been free I have tasted the sweets of liberty; and really it surpasses my expectation. It is a blessing indeed. The fraternal feeling, oh how delightful it is! No lord, no master, save one. All *we are brethren*. "Let brotherly love continue."

Yours in Christ,

JOHN FRENCH.

*Extract of a letter from the Rev. W. W. Hill, one of the agents for North Carolina, dated Warrenton, Feb. 2d, 1829.*

BROTHER DORSEY,—At some future period I expect to give you some concise account of things respecting reform in Carolina. I am now on a tour of some extent, and am pleased with our prospects. In some places our cause is triumphant, though in its infancy. All I think necessary for our speedy triumph throughout the state, is a regular plan of operation and a few efficient itinerant ministers, to act in union with our local materials. Our cause is dear to every patriot, statesman, and, I may add,

enlightened Christian, who thoroughly understands it. But it must have effective support.

Dr. Horne has been arrested, but has vanquished his assailants. You will soon hear from him I presume.

*Extract of a letter from the Rev. Eli Henkle, one of the agents for Maryland.*

DEAR BROTHER,—I commenced the duties assigned me by the late convention, on the Sabbath after I reached home, and organized the first class at Providence meeting house, on the same day.

The first person who came forward was our old friend, the Rev. Aquila Garretson, once a traveling preacher, but who has been local for many years past. In a few days after this event, I was informed by the preacher in charge of Baltimore Circuit that the meeting house had been secured, by a proper deed, to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that he did not know whether the trustees would allow the reformers to preach in it. Our friends in this neighborhood, however, appear to be determined to attend to this matter, without troubling the members of society. With all the menacing which we have heard from the *authorities*, we have still continued to use the house without interruption.

The second class in Baltimore Circuit was raised at Sandy Mount meeting house, on the first Sunday in December. The members of the old church in this place had become quite numerous, insomuch that Mr. S. had talked of dividing them into two



classes. This, however, they saved him the trouble of doing, by dividing *themselves*; and I suppose not altogether to his liking, for his class is as much too small now as it was too large before. This is called "ruining the society," although every one has been left entirely free to decide and act for himself. It will be remembered that many of the above members were the fruits of the reformers' camp-meeting, held in that neighborhood last October; to which we could not prevail on a single itinerant preacher to come. We next organized in Westminster, in Frederick county; and here our success was fully equal to my previous calculations. A good class was formed the first day, and others have joined since. We anticipate no difficulties respecting the meeting house in this place, as it is free; and the citizens are almost unanimously friendly to our cause, except members in the old church, and a few R\*\*\*\* C\*\*\*\*\*—distant kindred.

We also organized in Reisterstown, Baltimore Circuit. And here our numbers surpassed my expectations. Several of the oldest professors in the Methodist Episcopal Church joined the new class; and they also are permitted to worship in a house which belongs to the *people* of the village, who are generally our fast friends. In consequence of family afflictions, I have not yet been able to explore Great Falls Circuit to any extent. However I have made an effort to organize at two places; the first of which was at Cullison's meeting house,

where but few gave in their names—others intend to join hereafter. The next place was at Chesnut Ridge meeting-house, built for the Methodist society. The whole of both classes at this place made a transfer of themselves to the Associated Methodist Churches. There are many other places in readiness for us, and even anxious to leave the old establishment. I understand the trustees of several meeting houses have had their orders from the itinerants. I do not intend, however, to allow myself to be frightened by shadows. The six classes organized in this part of the country consist of about 160 or 170 members—nearly all out of the old church. Our meetings have been profitable.

' Last week I returned from a visit to Harford county, where I organized classes at the following places, viz: the Log meeting-house, Wesleyan church, Waters' meeting-house, Abingdon, Calvary meeting-house, and the Union chapel. The numbers in these places I cannot precisely state, but judge that the classes formed will average twelve or fifteen members. Many others are ready to unite in different places which I did not visit. At the Wesleyan church (a large new brick house) the whole society united with us. At the Union chapel the same calculation may be made. The leading members have led the way; and, although all have not yet followed them, we see a very fair prospect of their doing so, as the preachers of the circuit have not visited that appointment since the convention in November.

Our brethren of the new church are expecting and preparing for a preacher or two, immediately after the conference, and will contribute liberally towards their support. At present the new classes are under the care of brothers Richardson and Webster, who have agreed on a time when they intend to visit the upper part of Harford Circuit.

The first Quarterly Meeting in Harford, for the new church, is to be held on the last Saturday and Sunday in March. The place will be named hereafter. At our meetings we usually had comfortable seasons. They were well attended. I intended inserting several interesting anecdotes, but feared I would be too tedious.

The first church was formed in the city of Philadelphia under the conventional articles of association, in March, 1829, as the following extract of a letter from the columns of the Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer will show:

PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 30, 1829.

BROTHER DORSEY,—You will please to consider this an official communication. In the beginning of the present month the association of reformers in this city adjourned *sine die*. A few days after, a CHURCH was formed and the conventional articles adopted, except the fifteenth, which, having no application in this part of the country, was waived. Our well beloved brother Dr. Thomas Dunn is our chosen pastor. Our first meeting for public worship

was held on the 22d inst., at which time so evident were the enlightening, suasive and melting influences of divine grace on both the preacher and congregation, that no one could deny the presence of the divine and only Head of the church.

Classes have been formed, prayer meetings held, and on the 28th and 29th inst. a Quarterly Meeting was holden. In *all* our meetings the Saviour of our Israel has vouchsafed his blessings, and more especially in our love-feast on Sabbath morning, when we had *peace* and *Christian fellowship*, and were all of *one* mind and of *one* heart. There were about one hundred and fifty present. We have every needed assurance that our duty is to take courage and press forward, praising the Lord continually. The Wesleyan Society of *Kensington* (a district of this city) adopted the conventional articles on the 26th inst. That society consists of more than two hundred members, and has a good meeting house.

W. S. STOCKTON, }  
JOSEPH CRAMER, } *Committee.*

In the northern and north-western States the work of reform prospered greatly during the year 1829. Churches and societies were organized, and circuits were formed in many parts of the country, although the clerical itinerants labored hard to stifle inquiry and arrest the efforts of the advocates of mutual rights. In some places some of the best and most efficient of traveling ministers were understood to be on the side of reform, and when

the conventional articles began to be adopted by the people, and calls were made for ministers, such preachers promptly responded to the Macedonian call, dissolved their connection with the M. E. Church, and enlisted themselves under the banners of the new organization.

We shall here introduce a letter from the Rev. George Brown, of the Pittsburg Conference, who had long been known as a decided advocate of reform, to the presiding elder of his district.

PITTSBURG, PA., JUNE 3, 1829.

MY DEAR BROTHER EDDY,—The time has now arrived for me to follow my principles as a reformer, or abandon them. I have taken time and written extensively to the reformers, and particularly to the members of the late convention in Baltimore, and am now satisfied as to the objectionable articles. *They* and all the rest were *well meant*, and for the *present* may be *useful*; and for my own part I do not entertain a single doubt that the convention of 1830 will construct a system of ecclesiastical government which will be in all respects perfectly congenial with republican principles and feelings.

My feeble services have been called for in four different directions. The brethren of three out of four desired me to be in readiness against a certain time, but the fourth was a call that would admit of no delay. Being unable to ascertain where a communication would find you on your district, and being much pressed with other business about the

time I left New Lisbon, I have delayed until now to inform you, as my presiding elder, that on last Sabbath my labors in the Methodist Episcopal Church were brought to a final close. I have many valuable friends in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the ministry and among the members. I now, as heretofore, testify my affection for the doctrines, class meetings, love-feasts, moral discipline, sacraments, and itinerancy of the church. But the government I do most conscientiously disapprove; and since all hope of change is now cut off; and since the brethren who were expelled, in part on my account, cannot honorably return; and since a new church had to be formed; I have deemed myself bound by all the principles of Christian honor to go with the reformers. You will not understand me to have one unloving sentiment or feeling about my soul in reference to you. No, my brother; nor have I any in reference to a single individual this day on earth. I love my God. I love his people of every name. I desire the happiness of all the human race. I go with the reformers because I love their principles; and my prayer to the great and glorious Lord of the whole creation is that they may universally prevail!

With great respect, I am, &c.

GEO. BROWN.

REV. IRA EDDY, *P. E. O. District.*

The reformers in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, had been soliciting the Rev. Mr. Brown to come to that

city and take charge of them as an Associated Methodist Church; and prior to the date of the letter addressed to the Rev. Mr. Eddy, the presiding elder, he had adopted the resolution of yielding to their call, and casting in his lot among them. His letter of response, to the committee that were appointed to correspond with him, seems to breathe such a spirit, and teems with such information, that it cannot fail to interest. We subjoin a copy.

'NEW LISBON, MAY 27, 1829.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Your second communication has been received, and I hasten to inform you that on next Sabbath I close my labors for ever in the Methodist Episcopal Church. I had supposed myself already done, and had fixed on this morning to set off for Pittsburg; but by an importunity that I could not resist, on the part of some of the brethren and other friendly citizens, I have been overcome. I love this people; they have evinced a friendship for me and mine, during my residence among them, that has made me greatly their debtor; and besides, they are nearly all reformers, so far as they understand the subject; and they desire me to state my reasons on Sunday for leaving the old establishment. This, through divine help, I design doing, in the close of my second sermon, in as clear and candid a manner as possible.

There is another consideration of some moment. Mrs. Brown's health is still very feeble; but, thank God, it improves a little; and against next week I can in all probability leave home with more pro-

priety than now. I shall be off on Monday next, God willing, and shall probably be with you on Tuesday night. I have just received a letter from brother Shinn, inviting me to Cincinnati to form a circuit round that city. He assures me, on good authority, that a good circuit could be formed in a very little time. I have also received official information from Ohio Circuit, stating that they go at the end of this conference year, and will take no more preachers from the old side. They have asked me to come over and help them.

I have just received another private communication from ..... circuit, calling for help. The "divinely authorized" have forbidden a very respectable local preacher, whom no threats could terrify into silence, the occupancy of some of the pulpits; and the brethren think this is as proper a time as any to be off. The circuit is large, say one thousand strong, and it is thought a majority of them are reformers. The letter stated that the conventional articles, though somewhat objectionable, would be adopted for the present. If we can only get a constitution formed on purely republican principles, under the blessing of our glorious Lord, we shall abundantly succeed with a *liberty loving people*. I think the day may yet come when we, who are only becoming a people, shall sit under our own vine and fig tree, eating the pleasant fruit of ecclesiastical liberty, none daring to make us afraid. Our opposing brethren, from the bishops down, have done all they could to crush the Mutual



Rights; but surely they have failed of success. Much less will they be able to withstand us when our preachers go in person preaching the same gospel, carrying with them the same moral rules of holy living, giving the people an itinerant ministry, love-feasts, class-meetings, and distributing our principles of government in pamphlets as they go. Ours is the glorious cause of *ecclesiastical emancipation*, and has no enemies in America save on the old side; and I greatly miss my guess if the very means which they have employed, and are now employing against us and our cause, do not ultimately help in many ways.

Give my love to all the holy brethren of the like precious faith with ourselves, and tell them that I desire an interest in their prayers. I am a frail child of the dust. I tremble much at the vastness of our undertaking. Our only help is in the strong God of Zion. He inhabits eternity, but his eye is fixed on the truth and him who loves it, however poor he may be. Him I love, and do most ardently long for that *perfect liberty from sin* which he alone can give; and I do most cordially believe that we need not remain in ecclesiastical bondage in order to enjoy this "glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Very affectionately yours, &c.

GEORGE BROWN.

MR. W. STEVENSON,	} Committee.
" S. REMINGTON,	
" C. CRAIG,	

The subject of reform, during 1829, extended as far north as Boston, and secessions from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and organizations under the conventional articles of association, took place in New York and New England. Revivals of religion attended the labors of the ministry of the newly organized church in many places. The "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer" of this year says, "It affords no small gratification and comfort to receive such assurances of the divine favor and blessing as our infant Zion is realizing in different parts of the country. After a long and fiery trial, hundreds who have endured with patience, and stood firm to their purpose, are beginning to see the fruit of their labor. Surely if heaven's smiles are to be received as evidence that a people is right, this people is right. Would the Lord own and bless the labors of apostates in this gracious manner? The work is spreading in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and several other places; and the Lord is adding to the associated churches daily such as give evidence that they have passed from death unto life, and some who promise great usefulness to the church."

The labors of the Rev. Alexander McCaine, traveling agent in the south, were of eminent service in the cause of reform. His letters to the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer" are highly interesting. In his close of a series he sums up in these words:

“And as this is the last of the series, before I close it I will be allowed to sum up in a few words an account of my labors in the cause of reform. It was nearly nine months since I first left home until my return at Christmas. In that time I traveled from the mountains to the sea-board in Virginia, crossed North Carolina four times, and was in South Carolina twice. Wherever I preached I had far larger congregations than I used to have when I was an itinerant preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. I felt, blessed be God, as much of the comforts of religion in my own soul, and saw as much of the divine presence among the congregations, as I generally did in former years. I have received, wherever I went, far more respectful attention than I ever received in the old church. I have convened with the high and the low, the rich and the poor; and have conversed with all ranks in the community, from the governor down to the day laborer; with judges, lawyers, doctors, legislators, ministers, magistrates, merchants, mechanics, farmers, &c. &c., on the subject of reform, and have not, in all my travels, or among all those with whom I have conversed, ever found one man who did not say reformers are right, and that their cause must finally prevail. Amen and amen.

“ALEXANDER MCCAINE.”

## CHAPTER IX.

Organization of the North Carolina Conference.—Adoption of the Constitution and Discipline.—Persecution of reformers in Western Carolina.—Expulsion of Rev. Travis Jones.—Organization of Associated Methodist Churches and rapid spread of reform principles in that part of the state.—Statistical table of the ministers and laymen expelled for their principles of reform in the United States.—First Virginia Annual Conference.—Pennsylvania, Alabama and Georgia Conferences.—Adoption of the conventional articles by a body of Methodist Societies in W. New York and organization of the Genesee Conference.—Vermont and Tennessee Conferences.—General Convention of 1830.—Constitution and Discipline adopted.

THE Baltimore convention closed its session on the 22d November, 1828. The proscribed and expelled reformers in North Carolina had looked to the result of its deliberations with anxious solicitude; scattered and peeled as they had been, and proscribed by the "*divinely authorized*," they had hoped that by the labors of the convention a platform would be arranged upon which they could rally. Their hopes were not disappointed.

The expelled and withdrawn ministers who had suffered prosecution for opinion's sake, concerning church polity alone, met together in Annual Conference at Whitaker's chapel, Halifax county, on the 19th of December of this year.

They were met by delegates elected and deputed by the laity to represent them in the deliberations of the conference.

They organized by the election of Rev. E. B. Whitaker, president pro tem., and Rev. Miles Nash, Secretary.

The conference was composed of eight ministers, five licensed preachers and twelve lay delegates. Seven of these eight ministers present had been expelled from the M. E. Church without any charge of immorality being exhibited against them. The other minister, Rev. W. W. Hill, had been tried by a committee on account of his principles as an advocate of mutual rights, and acquitted.

Every member of this conference had belonged to the Roanoke Union Society except the five licensed preachers.

The ministers that composed this, the first North Carolina Conference, were Rev. James Hunter, Rev. E. B. Whitaker, Rev. William Bellamy, Rev. Henry Bradford, Rev. Miles Nash, Rev. William Price, Rev. William W. Hill, and Rev. Abriton Jones.

Owing to the early meeting of this conference after the rise of the Baltimore convention, and the consequent shortness of the notice given, the members of the Granville Union Society were not able to make the arrangements to attend, or elect their delegates to represent them in that body.

The "preamble, articles of association and resolutions, as adopted by the convention at Baltimore," were taken up and considered by this conference, and *unanimously* adopted.

The conference made arrangements to bring into

the most effective action the labors of its ministers. Three circuits were formed, and ministers assigned to the superintendency of the same. The Rev. W. W. Hill was appointed an agent to travel throughout the state.

The friends of reform had now a star of hope to illumine their path. The articles of association were embraced by them as a bond of union, and churches and societies of much strength, respectability and influence, were formed in the eastern part of Carolina, despite the efforts of the votaries of clerical supremacy.

The second session of the North Carolina Conference was held at Sampson's meeting house, on the 2d of April, 1829. At the opening of this session, several ministers gave in their names and were received as members of the body who had not had an opportunity of attending the first session. Arrangements were made at this conference for a more extended plan of operations. A fourth circuit was added to the previous number.

But the hand of persecution for opinion's sake had not yet been stayed. A short time prior to this period the Rev. James Hunt, who had previously been arraigned for belonging to the Granville Union Society, was again summoned to trial, and expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church upon the charge that he had *invited* one of the ministers who was laboring in the cause of reform, to preach at one of his appointments, and that invitation had been accepted.

In the western part of Carolina the Rev. Mr. Merriwether, superintendent of the Guilford Circuit, began to distinguish himself by his zeal in executing the reformers upon the Guilford Circuit. In the month of April of this year, 1829, after having preached at Moriah in Guilford county, the congregation being dismissed, he took one of the brethren, Col. William Gilbreath, aside, and upon inquiring of the brother, and learning that he was a patron and reader of the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," this clerical lord over God's heritage in a most dictatorial manner told brother Gilbreath that he "must neither patronize nor read the 'Mutual Rights.'" To which the brother responded, "*What I buy and pay for is my own, and I will read as I please.*" But the reverend gentleman, feeling strong no doubt in his "*little brief authority,*" brought his arguments to a close by the adoption of language better suited to the latitude of Rome than it was to Carolina, and in a most consequential manner told brother Gilbreath, "*I will give you four weeks to consider about quitting the 'Mutual Rights,' and if by that time you do not discontinue it, I will have you expelled from the church.*" The reply to this proffered alternative is characteristic of the honest simplicity and native independence of the man; "*You need not give me five minutes, for I will read, and also circulate it, if any body else wants to read the work.*"

Brother Gilbreath, feeling alarmed for the rights of himself and brethren as Christians, gave them

due notice of the menacing attitude their pastor had assumed towards himself and them, and a meeting of the church was called in order to consult upon the proper course to be pursued. The meeting took place on the 7th of May, just two weeks after brother Gilbreath had been notified to discontinue the "Mutual Rights." The meeting was organized by calling the Rev. John Coe to the chair, and the appointment of Joseph Gilbreath secretary. The president opened the meeting by an address to the throne of grace.

On motion, the following brethren, Jesse Ives, William Heath, John Hinkman, James Hendrix and William Gilbreath, were appointed a committee, who submitted the following preamble and resolutions, which were read, examined and adopted by the meeting.

"Whereas it is the undoubted right of all free-men peaceably to assemble and freely to declare their sentiments on the conduct of their ecclesiastical as well as civil rulers;—and whereas, when the General Conference were petitioned to give up the dangerous power which they had assumed, they refused to do it, and professed that they were the divinely instituted authority to make, alter and enforce the laws of the church, and have denied us the liberty of the press and the freedom of speech; and the preacher in charge of this circuit having expressed a determination to prefer charges against all the members who circulate the 'Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer,' or propagate the prin-



ciples of reform therein supported, which this meeting believe to be reasons sufficient to justify the adoption of the following resolutions: Therefore,

"Resolved, 1st. That this meeting highly disapprove of the government of the M. E. Church, so far as it respects the unlimited control of the itinerant preachers over the church; believing it to be contrary to the rules laid down by our Saviour in the New Testament, and practiced upon by his apostles after his ascension to glory, and contrary to our federal and state constitutions.

"Resolved, 2. That we consider it a duty which we owe to ourselves and our posterity, to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Resolved, 3. That the articles of association of the Associated Methodist Churches be adopted, and we do hereby form ourselves into a society under their regulations.

"Resolved, 4. That this meeting receive the Rev. John Coe, local elder, and Isaac Coe, licensed preacher, into our church, in the same standing which they had in the Methodist Episcopal Church, as ministers, with the same offices and privileges."

This church thus organized, consisted of thirty-four members; and when the Rev. Mr. Merriwether returned at the end of his "*four weeks*," he found that but *two* of all his flock at Moriah, were left in the pales of the M. E. Church. The Rev. John Coe accepted the invitation and charge of the church, and prosperity attended the labors of this faithful minister of Christ. This was the first As-

sociated Methodist Church in Western Carolina, and the influence which it has exerted, and the beneficial results produced thereby in furtherance of the principles of Methodist Protestantism, have been vast indeed.

But the Rev. Mr. Merriwether was not willing to stop here. Having ascertained that the Rev. Travis Jones, an aged local minister within his charge, was a patron and reader of the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," he proceeded to summon him to trial in due form, alleging no charges of immorality against him—no allegations, save those of patronizing and reading that religious periodical. The committee sat, Mr. Merriwether presided, and Rev. Travis Jones, orthodox in doctrine, unblemished in reputation, was expelled from the M. E. Church.

This high-handed measure produced deep dissatisfaction in the church at Bethel, in the vicinity of Rev. Mr. Jones; this church was composed of a numerous society, highly respectable for its piety, numbers and influence; but seeing brother Jones stricken down so unjustly by the hand of arbitrary power, from his ministerial functions, without the semblance of error on his part, this whole church (with one or two exceptions) withdrew in a body and united with the reformers. Indeed Mr. Merriwether seems to have been quite an adept in the science of making reformers in little time. But the zeal for proscribing brethren for opinion's sake carried the Rev. Mr. Merriwether farther still, and he

visited a neighboring circuit, and at a two days' meeting on that circuit undertook to expose, as he affected to believe, the errors and mischievous tendency of the conduct and the course pursued by the "*radicals*," as he was pleased to call them. His object appeared to be to incite a spirit of hostility against the reformers generally, and those composing the church at Moriah particularly. A camp-meeting soon came on in this part of the country, and some official brethren, who had recently attended a Quarterly Meeting Conference among the reformers at Moriah, were in attendance, who soon understood that this *act* of attending a meeting among their Christian friends had rendered them obnoxious in the sight of their itinerant rulers. Among the itinerants at this meeting, that noted leader in proscriptive rudeness, the Rev. Benjamin Edge, who had been so severely scathed by the defence of Rev. W. W. Hill, in August, 1825, made his appearance. His feelings towards the reformers had undergone no change for the better.

As Quarterly Conference was to be held in connection with the camp-meeting, a brother, Alexander Robbins, came up recommended for license to preach, but as he had been to a meeting among the reformers, he was looked upon as one of the "*birds in strange feathers*." One of the preachers understanding that bro. Robbins was desirous to discontinue the "Christian Advocate" and to take the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," in order to hear both sides of the question, endeav-

ored to dissuade him from such a step; and proposed to him to patronize the paper called the "*Itinerant*," promising at the same time that he should have it gratis, provided he did not patronize the "*Mutual Rights*." At this stage of the controversy, the Rev. B. Edge addressing himself to Mr. Robbins remarked, "I have said that you were on the way to join the reformers, as I have heard that you have been to a meeting among the '*Rads*.'" To which Mr. Robbins replied, "I have, but what of that?"

*Benjamin Edge.* We will cut down every man that will associate with that people.

*A. Robbins.* But have you a right to cut them down if their conduct is upright and their characters stand fair?

*B. Edge.* Yes, we have; for who can walk among the pots without getting smutted? These schismatics are a bad people.

*A. Robbins.* If you intend to cut down and destroy the influence of every man for no other cause than visiting his religious friends, I will belong to no such a party; and I do therefore declare that I am no longer a member of the M. E. Church.

Of the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Edge we will leave the reader to form his own opinion. We regret, deeply regret, on account of the ministerial office, that it is so deficient of the spirit and sanctity of religion. Mr. Robbins made no effort at this meeting to obtain preacher's license, but having a consultation with Rev. John Wilburn and Rev.

Alson Gray, local preachers, and relating to them the declarations set forth by Mr. Edge, they also resolved to withdraw from the M. E. Church. They accordingly designated the following Saturday as the time for meeting, to organize themselves into an Associated Methodist Church under the conventional articles. The meeting was held and a church of sixteen members was formed, called Liberty, including four local preachers. This church soon rapidly increased in membership, and prosperity has continued to mark her progress up to the present period. To these three churches of which we have spoken, Moriah, Bethel and Liberty, may be attributed the rise and formation of six circuits in Western Carolina, numbering upwards of two thousand members.

Through the indefatigable labors of Rev. Alson Gray, the principles of mutual rights were speedily disseminated in this part of Carolina, and many churches organized. An account of one of the churches organized by that minister, is worthy of a place in this history.

At Sandy Ridge, Guilford county, he organized a class of *three ladies*—Mrs. Lindsay and Mrs. Anna and Harriet Chipman. The place of worship at that time was in a small dilapidated school house. For twelve months did this little band of pious females stand alone. Gloomy indeed appeared the prospect. But they fainted not nor despised the day of small things. At length a revival of religion broke out; their numbers were increased and the

star of prosperity began to shine upon their path. In 1844 this society numbered upwards of one hundred and seventy members, and has since had a respectable increase.

In summing up an account of the excommunications which took place in Carolina, it appears that the following ministers of the gospel were expelled from the M. E. Church on account of their opinions with regard to the polity of the church, viz: Revs. James Hunter, Henry Bradford, William Bellamy, E. B. Whitaker, William Price, Miles Nash, Albriton Jones, C. Drake, J. Swift, S. Swift, H. Tar-kington, R. Davison, James Hunt, Travis Jones.

Among the laity it appears that not more than eight suffered excommunication on account of their reform principles. The proscription of all these ministers and laymen appears to have met the approbation and concurrence of the Quarterly and Annual Conferences having cognizance of the actions of the principal administrators of discipline.

In the State of Maryland, as we gather from the documents and publications extant, thirteen ministers and twenty-two laymen were expelled for the same causes as the above.\*

In Cincinnati four ministers or preachers and ten laymen.

In Lynchburg two ministers and nine laymen, and in Northumberland, Va., one minister and eight laymen.

\* See Mutual Rights, vol. iii, p. 129.

In Tennessee fifteen official members of the church were publicly read out, a number of which were ministers and preachers.

The case of the expulsions in the last named state was carried up to the Annual Conference, and that body not only reversed the decision had against these reformers in the tribunals below, but passed resolutions censuring the conduct of the presiding elder, the Rev. James Gwynn, through whose agency and action they had been expelled.

The action of the Tennessee Annual Conference in this case materially differs from that of the Virginia and Baltimore Conferences. Appeals of a similar nature, involving the same principles and rights, were carried up to them, but in both instances the administrations of the men in power were approved.

The following table affords something like a statistical account of the expelled ministers and members that were excluded from the M. E. Church during the agitation of the subject of reform.

In Maryland, of the ministry, . . .	13	—of the laity, . . .	22
“ N. Carolina, “ . . .	14	“ “ “ . . .	8
“ Cincinnati, “ . . .	4	“ “ “ . . .	10
“ Lynchburg, Va., “ . . .	2	“ “ “ . . .	9
“ Northumberland, Va., “ . . .	1	“ “ “ . . .	8
“ Tennessee, “ . . .	5	“ “ “ . . .	10
Total ministers		39	total laity 67

Sum total 106.

If we take into the account the five churches struck off from the Roanoke Circuit in Carolina,

containing nearly one hundred members in the aggregate, the number is greatly increased.

The first Virginia Annual Conference<sup>d</sup> was organized under the conventional articles of association at Lynchburg, June 1st, 1829. The conference was composed of the following ministers, viz: Rev. A. McCaine, Rev. J. B. Tilden, Rev. G. Reed, Rev. Miles King, Rev. B. G. Burgess, Rev. Wm. Pinnell, Rev. Benedict Burgess, Sr., Rev. Richard Latimore, Rev. W. H. Comann, Rev. Dr. J. French, and Rev. John Percival.\* The Rev. Alexander McCaine was elected president. The district was laid off into eight circuits, and the ministers were appointed to their respective charges or fields of labor.

October the 8th of this year an Annual Conference of Associated Methodist Churches was organized at Philadelphia, "composed of ministers, preachers, and lay delegates from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and western section of the State of New York. Eighteen ordained ministers and fifteen licensed preachers and lay brethren composed the conference. The Rev. John Smith, of Delaware, an old and highly respected minister, was elected president."† This conference laid off its fields of labor into fifteen different charges.

On the 2d of April the Maryland Conference of Associated Methodists met in the city of Baltimore.

\* The names of the lay delegates are not recorded in this work.

† See "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer" for October 20th, 1829.



Twenty ordained ministers and twenty-six lay delegates were in attendance. During the session six deacons were ordained to the office of elder, and also six licentiates were ordained to deacon's orders. The Rev. Nicholas Snethen was elected president.

At the ensuing session this conference made a return of about 2,000 members.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE ALABAMA CONFERENCE.

Extract of a letter from Rev. Peyton Bibb, published in the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," dated Alabama, May 15th, 1829.

"Our Annual Conference for South Alabama met on the 1st instant. It was attended by sixteen preachers, who joined the reform churches under the articles of association; and there were two others whose ideas of reform extended further than the articles appear to go. They did not join, but are willing to assist us with their labors. There were four others who sent in their names as reformers. The first business was to call a meeting of the Union Society and read the articles of association, which were adopted, and the society dissolved. The conference then convened, and after appointing the Rev. Britton Copel their president, proceeded to lay off the work among the preachers. They appointed another conference to be held in the latter part of the year. Peace and love crowned our meeting."

This conference, at its second session, held September 16th, 1830, reported 881 members.

The first Annual Conference of the Associated Methodist Churches, for the State of Georgia, was held in Newton county, on the 22d of July, 1830. The conference was organized by the election of Rev. Eppes Tucker, president, and Harrison Jones, secretary. The following ministers were regarded as members of this conference:—Revs. Eppes Tucker, Aaron G. Brewer, Jesse Morris, R. W. W. Wynne, Jas. Lowery, R. P. Ward, Ethel Tucker, Robert Walker, Chas. Williamson, Harrison Jones, John A. Russell, Robert McCorkle, Thomas Gardner, Henry Saxon, B. Swearingen, James Hodge, Abraham Lucas, William Pentecost, J. R. Swain, C. P. Witherspoon.

Twelve lay delegates were in attendance as members of this conference, representing the membership. The conference laid off the district into eleven circuits or fields of labor and one mission. The Rev. A. G. Brewer was appointed conference missionary.

An account of the earlier proceedings of the friends of mutual rights in Georgia, though somewhat out of order as to rotation of dates, will not be uninteresting to the reader. The following, from the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," is from the pen of the Rev. A. G. Brewer :

"The first organization of reformers in this State took place in 1827, under the Discipline of the *Methodist Society*. The number in the societies was about seventy. Their number became a little

impaired by reason of the difficulties they had to encounter, both by persecution and the want of sufficient ministerial help; but they, nevertheless, retained upwards of sixty members. Early in the year 1829 they adopted the '*Conventional Articles* of the Associated Methodist Churches,' and have had some little increase since. But the spirit of reform was not confined to this despised few; many in the State, in different counties, were examining the principles and vindicating the rights of the local ministers and lay members to a seat in the legislative department of the church of God. And within nine months last past they have organized ten or twelve churches under the conventional articles, and are rapidly increasing. They now number about three hundred in this State. There are at least sixteen preachers, and the number is increasing. The excitement spreads just in proportion to the spread of information on the subject of the pending controversy between us and the 'old side church.' For so soon as the people are made acquainted with the just claims of the reformers, and the treatment they have received from the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (the 'divinely authorized expounders,' as they are pleased to call themselves,) they are our decided friends, and concede the rights we claim.

"I presume the work will spread much more rapidly after our conference and camp-meeting than it has yet done, as the conference will undoubtedly be able to give a greater extent of privileges to the

churches, by enlarging the field of labor of the preachers. In fine, our prospects are good, and nothing can prevent our success but a want of faithfulness to God. May the Fountain of goodness help us in this struggle for an ecclesiastical independence.

“Truly and sincerely yours, in Christian liberty,

“AARON G. BREWER.

“Georgia, April 16th, 1830.”

Early in the year 1830 a body of Methodists who had been organized as a distinct ecclesiastical body in western New York, and had formed an Annual Conference embracing about twenty-five ministers and preachers, and between four and five hundred members, adopted the conventional articles of the Associated Methodist Churches, and fell into line with the reformers. The appellation by which this religious fraternity had heretofore been known was the *Methodist Society*. An account of this transaction is given in the “Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer” in the following words, by the secretary of the first Annual Conference, the Rev. O. Miller:

“The Rochester Annual Conference of the Methodist Society held its session in Ontario, Wayne county, commencing on the 13th inst., (February,) and having closed the ordinary business, the conference resolved itself into committee of the whole on the following question:

“‘Shall we adopt the conventional articles of the Associated Methodist Churches?’

“After considerable discussion and mature deliberation—although there were some of the articles which to us were somewhat objectionable, yet from our knowledge of the sentiments of our reforming brethren, as stated and ably defended in the ‘Mutual Rights,’ being convinced that their sentiments on ecclesiastical government were in unison with ours, and possessing the fullest confidence in their intelligence, piety, experience and talents, and presuming that the convention of 1830 will possess sufficient wisdom to correct any improprieties of the present articles—the conference adopted all the articles so far as they are not opposed to the Constitution of the Methodist Society, and resolved itself into a conference, under the title of the Genesee Conference of the Associated Methodist Churches; and proceeded to elect five delegates to attend the convention in Baltimore, in November next.”

The conference elected the Rev. J. Covell president, and laid off its district into seventeen fields of labor or circuits.

The first Annual Conference for the State of Vermont met, and was organized under the conventional articles of association, at Shelburn, on the 19th of February, 1830. The Rev. Luther Chamberlain was elected president, and C. Walker secretary. This conference was composed of five ministers and five lay delegates. The ministers were Rev. Luther Chamberlain, Rev. Nathaniel

Gage, Rev Chandler Walker, Rev. David Ferris, Rev. Thomas A. Carpenter.

The respective Annual Conferences which were organized up to the latter part of 1830 elected their delegates to represent them in the general convention which was to meet in Baltimore, on the 2d of November, in this year.

The first conference for the State of Tennessee was held in Bedford county, October, 1829. The writer has been unable to obtain a copy of its transactions, consequently he is unable to say any thing more with regard to its organization.

#### GENERAL CONVENTION.

On the 2d of November, 1830, the general convention met in the city of Baltimore. This body was composed of eighty-three ministerial and lay delegates, and was organized by the election of Francis Waters, D. D., president, and Rev. Wm. C. Lipscomb secretary. The committee which had been appointed at the convention of 1823 to draft a Constitution and Discipline, made their report by reading the "draft of a Constitution and Discipline."\* After minutely and carefully investigating the drafts presented, and making some small alterations, the present most excellent Constitution and Discipline, as it is found in the edition of 1830, were adopted.

The convention adopted the following preamble and elementary principles by which the Constitution stands prefaced :

\* See Williams's History of the M. P. Church, page 301.

We, the representatives of the Associated Methodist Churches, in general convention assembled, acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the church, and the word of God as the sufficient rule of faith and practice in all things pertaining to godliness; and being fully persuaded that the representative form of church government is the most scriptural, best suited to our condition, and most congenial to our views and feelings as fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and whereas a written Constitution, establishing the form of government, and securing to the ministers and members of the church their rights and privileges, is the best safeguard of Christian liberty; we, therefore, trusting in the protection of Almighty God, and acting in the name and by the authority of our constituents, do ordain and establish and agree to be governed by the following elementary principles and Constitution:

1. A Christian church is a society of believers in Jesus Christ, and is of divine institution.

2. Christ is the only Head of the church; and the word of God the only rule of faith and conduct.

3. No person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and obeys the gospel of God our Saviour ought to be deprived of church membership.

4. Every man has an inalienable right to private judgment in matters of religion, and an equal right to express his opinion in any way which will not violate the laws of God or the rights of his fellow men.

5. Church trials should be conducted on gospel principles only; and no minister or member should be excommunicated except for immorality, the propagation of unchristian doctrines, or for the neglect of duties enjoined by the word of God.

6. The pastoral or ministerial office and duties are of divine appointment, and all elders in the church of God are equal; but ministers are forbidden to be lords over God's heritage, or to have dominion over the faith of the saints.

7. The church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations only as are in accordance with the holy Scriptures, and may be necessary or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical Christianity.

8. Whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations is inherent in the ministers and members of the church; but so much of that power may be delegated, from time to time, upon a plan of representation, as they may judge necessary and proper.

9. It is the duty of all ministers and members of the church to maintain godliness and to oppose all moral evil.

10. It is obligatory on ministers of the gospel to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties; and it is also obligatory on the members to esteem ministers highly for their work's sake, and to render them a righteous compensation for their labors.



11. The church ought to secure to all her official bodies the necessary authority for the purposes of good government; but she has no right to create any distinct or independent sovereignties.

These elementary principles embrace what the reformers, whilst within the pales of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had petitioned and contended for, and for which they had suffered persecution, proscription and expulsion; and the Constitution was carefully drawn so as not to conflict with those principles.

It will be unnecessary to embody the Constitution in the plan of this work, inasmuch as that instrument has been so generally read and examined by all who have perused the Discipline of the Methodist Protestant Church. In the first article of the Constitution the title of the church is given in these words: "This association shall be denominated **THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH**, comprising the Associated Methodist Churches."

The members of this communion, whilst within the pales of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had by their writings, their essays, their memorials, their remonstrances, and their acts, protested against the governmental policy of that church, but never against her doctrines; and in adopting a name by which the church was to be known among her sister churches, the convention chose the above title as expressive of the principles of her ecclesiastical polity.

The Constitution of the Methodist Protestant Church is justly entitled to the admiration of every lover of mutual rights. It secures to the ministry and membership all that is scripturally and legitimately their right. It serves as a barrier to prevent the one from encroaching upon the prerogatives of the other, and is a beautiful exemplification of church polity for which the reformers had been contending, and for which they had suffered so much contumely and reproach. One of the articles of the Constitution, which makes provision for altering the same, may not perhaps be improperly inserted here, inasmuch as one item has been amended or altered since its adoption.

**“ART. 16.—*Provisions for altering the Constitution.***

1. The General Conference shall have power to amend any part of this constitution except the second, tenth and fourteenth articles; by making alterations or additions, as may be recommended in writing, by two-thirds of the whole number of the Annual Conferences next preceding the sitting of the General Conference.

“2. The second, tenth and fourteenth articles of this constitution shall be unalterable, except by a general convention called for the special purpose by two-thirds of the whole number of the Annual Conferences, next preceding the General Conference, which convention, and all other conventions of this church, shall be constituted and elected in the same manner and ratio as prescribed for the General Conference. When a General Conference

is called by the Annual Conference, it shall supersede the assembling of the General Conference for that period; and shall have power to discharge all the duties of that body, in addition to the particular object for which the convention shall have been assembled."

It will be observed that this article makes provision for altering the constitution, and in conformity thereto the first section of the eighth article was altered at the General Conference of 1838. That article required the General Conference to be held once in seven years, but it was soon ascertained that the interval between the meetings of the General Conference would be too long, and at a called session of the General Conference in 1838, the period of meeting was altered to every fourth year thereafter..

The convention likewise passed the following resolution:

"Whereas it is declared by this convention that, whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations, is inherent in the ministers and members of the church; and that so much of that power may be delegated from time to time, upon a plan of representation, as they may judge proper: therefore,

"Resolved, That all power not delegated to the respective official bodies of the Methodist Protestant Church by this convention, are retained to said ministers and members."

The preceding resolution was passed about the

close of the session, and exhibits in a most striking point of view the due regard which the convention had for the rights of their constituents. Every article they adopted, and every resolution they passed, was worthy the wisdom and integrity of that body. They had been delegated with authority by their Christian brethren to form a constitution, not for the convenience of a "*privileged few*," but for their Christian brethren of the entire church, both of the ministry and laity—American Christians, who justly appreciated their rights, both civil and religious. This convention therefore had the enviable satisfaction of presenting to the church, as the result of their labors, a *constitution* which amply met the wishes of their constituents, by securing the interests of all the parties concerned.

The hymn book published by John J. Harrod, and known by the title of "Associated Methodist Hymns," was adopted by the convention to be used in the churches until the ensuing General Conference. Up to this period the periodical devoted to the interests of the reformers or Associated Methodists, and first called the "Mutual Rights," and afterwards the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," had been published upon the responsibility of the Baltimore Union Society. This paper was transferred by the Union Society to the convention, to be conducted under rules and regulations prescribed by its authority. Its name was now altered from that of "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," to "Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant."

The convention also appointed a book committee, consisting of five persons, whose duty it was "to select, from time to time, such books, tracts, &c., for publication as a majority of them might deem proper." A book agent was appointed to publish such books, tracts, &c., as might be agreed on by the book committee and himself; all of which were required to be sold to the conferences, preachers and members at wholesale prices. The agent was required to make a discount of ten per cent. from the wholesale prices on all money paid to him by the conferences, preachers and members, which ten per cent. was to be paid over to the book committee, to be held by them as a book fund for the church. A resolution was also adopted, that the several Annual Conferences be most earnestly requested to adopt such measures as in their wisdom they may deem most proper for the purpose of creating additional funds, to aid in the establishment of a book concern by the ensuing General Conference.\*

The conferences which were represented in, and recognized by the convention, were the Vermont, the Boston, the New York and Lower Canada, the Genesee, the Pennsylvania, the Maryland, the Virginia, the North Carolina, the Tennessee, the Georgia, and the Ohio; amounting in number to thirteen.

From the rise of the convention until the meet-

\* See first edition of the Discipline M. P. Church.

ing of the General Conference in 1834, the Methodist Protestant Church continued steadily to increase in numbers; although her downfall or dissolution was confidently predicted by those who prayed not for her prosperity. Some of those *foretellers* of events limited her existence to three years; others to seven; and some few allotted her ten; but it is believed that none of these prophets had a perfect knowledge of the things whereof they spake, although *they* spake as *they* were moved.

Julius Cæsar once made the remark, that "it is very natural for a man to *believe* that which he *wishes* to take place." Upon this principle, therefore, we may account for the manner in which many of the prophecies in regard to the Methodist Protestant Church were predicted. After the organization of the M. P. Church, it was very common for the ministry and membership of that communion to be represented by some who were to be found in the pales of the old church, as "Backsliders," Expelled persons," "Radicals," "Restless Spirits;" the community in many places were cautioned against them as persons altogether unworthy of Christian regard. But wherever the causes and principles which led to the formation of the M. P. Church were understood among other religious denominations, she was respected and regarded as a branch of the church of Christ; and probably among all the churches throughout the United States, none has manifested a more courteous, liberal and Christianlike spirit towards this

young daughter of Zion, than the Presbyterian Church.

The kindness and courtesy manifested by the Presbyterian brethren towards the ministry of the M. P. Church, have placed the latter under a lasting debt of gratitude, as well as elevated themselves thereby, in the respect and esteem of the latter. Perhaps this was the cause that induced the Rev. Cornelius Springer of Ohio, in a speech upon the floor of our last General Conference, to call the "*Presbyterian the most respectable Church in the United States.*" Some member of the body objected to the phraseology of the speaker, as it seemed to place that church too pre-eminent over the other sister churches—the speaker then, with that characteristic pleasantness for which he is distinguished, transposed the sentiment by changing it into this form, "the Presbyterian church, which is among the most respectable in the United States."

They are our friends who cleave to us in the day of adversity, and it is but proper and right that we should love and appreciate those friends; and that we as a church have not been deficient in this respect, we think the following anecdote will show: A gentleman of the M. E. Church, addressing himself to a lady who was a member of the Methodist Protestant Church, remarked, "I understand, Miss —, that *the reformers are very fond of other denominations.*" To which she very promptly replied, "I am happy to inform you, sir, that other denominations are very fond of them."

## CHAPTER X.

General Conference of 1834.—General Conference of 1838.—Excitement in that body upon the subject of Slavery.—General Conference of 1842.—General Conference of 1846.—Boundaries of the Annual Conferences.—Statistical Table.—Concluding Remarks.

THE first General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church met in Georgetown, D. C., May 6th, 1834. The Rev. Nicholas Snethen was elected president, and Rev. William C. Lipscomb, secretary. The operations of the Constitution and Discipline had been watched and closely observed from their adoption up to this period, (a space of nearly four years,) and consequently the General Conference was prepared to make such alterations as the experience of the past might suggest.

By a comparison of the edition of the Discipline of 1841 with that of 1844, it will be observed that some very important changes and improvements were made.

This General Conference recognized fourteen Annual Conferences—the Pittsburg Conference being set off, constituting one more new conference district. The prosperity that had attended the labors of the ministry, and the consequent increase of numbers or numerical strength, according to the



statements of the Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant, were greatly encouraging. Opposition had generally been thrown in the way of the ministers of the Methodist Protestant Church, by the supporters of the one-man-power system; but the truth had been received by many, and embraced by such as had the manly independence to think, to choose, and act for themselves. The minutes of the several Annual Conferences now exhibited the membership as 26,587; and the ministers and preachers over 500, about one-third of whom were in the itinerancy.\* This General Conference took some preliminary steps in view of the establishment of a book concern to belong to the church, but the business did not succeed according to the expectations of its projectors.

From the rise of the General Conference of 1834, until the sitting of the General Conference of 1838, the cause of republican principles of church polity was onward. Methodist Protestantism continued to spread and her principles to be cherished. Extensive revivals of religion took place in many conferences, and large accessions were made to the church, although at the sitting of the ensuing General Conference it was ascertained that the ratio of increase (taking the entire connection into the account) had been small. But this may be accounted for upon the ground that in many places a great declension of religion had prevailed, seriously diminishing the numbers in other churches. It was during this

\* See Williams's History M. P. Church, page 327.

period that Methodist Protestantism began to obtain a foothold in South Carolina.

In the year 1834 a difficulty arose in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Charleston, in consequence of the high-handed and arbitrary measures of the men in power. The difficulty originated between the ministry and the officary of the church with regard to the extent of the rights or prerogatives of the latter as trustees. The matter was pushed to the most unpleasant extremes, and resulted in the expulsion of eight worthy and influential members from the church. This proceeding was of such a nature as to alarm many of the brethren and friends of the expelled with respect to their rights as members of the church. Accordingly about one hundred and fifty withdrew from the communion of the M. E. Church, and formed themselves into an independent church, and in a formal manner adopted the Methodist Protestant Discipline. This is an interesting church. Its trials have been great, but it has stood firm. Upon their organization they found themselves without a house of worship, and arrangements were soon made to build a suitable church. In the early part of 1835 the house was finished at a cost of \$12,000. In the year 1838 the great fire happened in Charleston, which consumed this beautiful house of worship, leaving the society without a place in which to worship their God, and a debt of four thousand dollars still hanging over them for the house consumed in the conflagration. But they fainted not

in the day of adversity. They determined to rebuild, and appealing to the benevolence of Christian friends abroad, they embarked in the effort and succeeded in erecting, upon the same spot on which the first had stood, another handsome and commodious church, and at this date are altogether free from church debt. Again, in the early part of 1845 the course pursued by the minister in charge of this station, involved the society in sore and trying difficulties by his indiscretions; and endeavoring to sustain himself in justification of his conduct, he formed a small party of adherents, who, upon his expulsion from the ministry, retired from the church. Again, two superintendents of this church have been stricken down by the hand of death within a few years, viz: Rev. D. Davis and Rev. William H. Bordley, pastors dearly beloved of the flock. The history of this church is full of interest. The misfortunes and trials it has borne have led many to call it the "*afflicted church*." It has been tried, sorely tried, and yet has stood firm. Its *materiel* is made up of sterling spirits, possessing sound principles, actuated by the holiest of purposes. The writer cannot soon forget the happy hours and delightful season of religious enjoyment he realized when attending their camp-meeting in 1845.

#### GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1838.

The General Conference of 1838 was a special session called by a constitutional majority of the Annual Conferences. After the rise of the General

Conference of 1834 it was believed by many that the interests of the church would be better subserved by the meeting of its highest legislative department at shorter intervals. The subject was discussed by many writers in the church organ, the "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer;" and the subject coming legally before the respective Annual Conferences, it was decided that a special session of the General Conference should meet in 1838, and delegates were accordingly elected to the same.

On the 15th of May, 1838, the second General Conference met at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; it was composed of fifty-three members, representing fifteen Annual Conferences.

The following are the names of the members of conference :

Boston Conference—John McLeish, W. Wyman.

Vermont Conference—John Croker, A. McLaughlin.

New York Conference—T. W. Pearson, J. L. Ambler, Wm. Wood, Wm. Stead.

Champlain Conference—Nathan Green.

Genesee Conference—Michael Burge, S. Beecher.

Pennsylvania Conference—A. Woolson, W. S. Stockton.

Maryland Conference—Thomas H. Stockton, Luther J. Cox, William Kesley, Wm. C. Lipscomb, John Clark, E. Crutchley, T. C. Brown, J. S. Zeiber.

Virginia Conference—Rev. Dr. Finney, J. M. Smith.

North Carolina Conference—Samuel B. Harris, L. H. B. Whitaker.

Georgia Conference—R. Blount, C. Kennon.

Alabama Conference—Peyton S. Graves, B. S. Bibb.

Tennessee Conference—R. W. Morris, James L. Armstrong.

Illinois Conference—Wm. H. Collins, R. A. Shipley.

Ohio Conference—B. W. Johnston, M. M. Henkle, William Disney, S. Bell, J. J. Amos, M. Lyon.

Pittsburg Conference—A. Shinn, George Brown, J. Elliott, C. Springer, E. Woodward, D. B. Dorsey, C. Avery, J. Carey, J. Bell, E. Haskins, T. McKeever, J. Barnes, W. Garrard, B. Connell.

The Rev. Asa Shinn, of the Pittsburg Conference, was elected president, and the Rev. T. W. Pearson, secretary.

No alterations of any importance were made in the Discipline at this session ; its general provisions being so well adapted to the wants of the church that it was deemed most prudent to make but little change.

At this session the first section of the eighth article of the Constitution was amended by striking out the word seventh, and instituting the word fourth, in its place, so as to require a meeting of the General Conference once in every four years, instead of every seven. A plan was adopted for the establishment of a church book concern. The project proposed was to raise a capital of \$20,000 for the purpose. The object had in view, in the establishment of the book concern, was of a twofold nature. 1. For the publication and circulation of such books as should tend to the diffusion of religious knowledge and to the promotion of piety. 2. The raising of a dividend to enable the Annual Conferences respectively to carry out their plans of itinerant operations, in disseminating the great truths of Christianity.

One of the sections of the plan adopted reads in the following words: "After the year 1842, let it be the duty of the committee to make dividends from the profits arising out of the business, to the

respective Annual Conferences, in proportion to the amount of actual capital invested by the respective conference districts." But the business of the concern not having succeeded as well as it was expected, no division of dividends has yet been made to the Annual Conferences, and the profits arising therefrom have been applied to the relief of the concern from its obligations and to the extension of its business.

It was at this session of the General Conference that some excitement first began to be manifested upon the subject of slavery in connection with the church; a subject, too, that most unhappily divides in feeling the north from the south, both in its civil and religious aspects, and the agitation of which there is much reason to fear has militated, not only against the peace of the church, but has in some places seriously affected the progress of religion. The truth of this assertion is sustained by history. The Methodist Episcopal Church presents a case in point. It was upon that exciting question that the north and south parted asunder at the General Conference of 1844; and within the space of two years it appears from the returns that the Northern portion of that church had suffered a decrease in membership of about fifteen thousand; and if we were to take into the account the bitterness of feeling that took possession of the hearts and minds of many, both of the ministry and laity, and the unhappy wrangling and controversy that ensued, the loss would appear still greater.

We have mentioned the introduction of this agitating subject into the General Conference of 1838, in order that its progress may be fairly traced in connection with the M. P. Church. The conference regarded the subject as one over which they could not take constitutional cognizance, and therefore referred it to the people, where it more properly belongs, or rather to the Annual Conferences where the subject in question is immediately concerned. Two new Annual Conferences were set off by this General Conference, viz: the Pittsburg and Illinois Districts. The name of the paper conducted as the organ of the church, and devoted to its interests, was now changed to that of "The Methodist Protestant and Family Visiter." As has been remarked in the preceding part of this chapter, the increase of the M. P. Church for the past four years had been small, and from the best calculations which we are able to make, it exceeded to some extent 28,000.

#### GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1842.

On the 3d of May, 1842, the third General Conference met in Baltimore, and continued its session fourteen days. There were fifty-one members in attendance from the following conferences:

Boston Conference—Thomas F. Norris, minister.

Vermont Conference—Lewis S. Fish, layman.

New York Conference—T. K. Witsil, Enoch Jacobs, ministers;  
John J. Reed, layman.

Champlain Conference—None in attendance.

Genesee Conference—A. Purnell, minister; Thomas Barkley, layman.

Onondaga Conference—O. E. Bryant, minister; L. B. Morris, layman.

Pennsylvania Conference—J. Smith, minister.

Maryland Conference—Francis Waters, A. Webster, John S. Reese, F. Stier, James R. Williams, W. C. Lipscomb, William H. Bordley, ministers; William S. Stockton, A. S. Naudain, Peter Light, E. Crutchley, J. B. Thomas, A. Waugh, William Rusk, laymen.

Virginia Conference—John G. Whitfield, minister; H. B. Woodhouse, layman.

North Carolina Conference—Alexander Albright, minister; Wilson C. Whitaker, Robert C. Rankin, laymen.

South Carolina Conference—Alexander McCaine, minister.

Georgia Conference—None in attendance.

Alabama Conference—P. S. Graves, minister; B. S. Bibb, layman.

Tennessee Conference—None in attendance.

Indiana Conference—Thomas Hicklin, H. P. Bennett, ministers; William Smith, John Burton, laymen.

Illinois Conference—William H. Collins, minister.

Mississippi Conference—Samuel Butler, minister.

Ohio Conference—A. H. Bassett, minister; J. Whetstone, D. C. Carson, laymen.

Pittsburg Conference—A. Shinn, John Burns, G. Brown, Z. Ragan, John Clarke, jr., C. Springer, ministers; Thomas Freeman, J. Souder, P. Lewis, James Clark, laymen.

Rev. Asa Shinn, of the Pittsburg Conference, was elected chairman, and Rev. A. H. Bassett, of the Ohio, and J. J. Reed, of the New York Conference, secretaries.

A few alterations or amendments of the Discipline were made at this conference, but principally relating to Annual Conferences, presidents of conferences, superintendents, missionaries, &c., all of which may be seen by comparing the edition of



the Discipline of 1842 with the preceding one. The amendments made were such as were suggested by experience, which no doubt will tend to promote the prosperity as well as secure the harmony of the church. At this conference the brethren from the north renewed the exciting subject of "abolition," which had been introduced into the preceding General Conference. Warm and animated debates ensued. The abolitionists were clamorous for the conference to adopt some definite rule upon the subject of slavery, declaring it sinful in all its aspects and relations, while the conservatives or moderate men of both parties stood by the constitution, maintaining the ground that the General Conference had no constitutional authority to legislate upon moral subjects—that the question properly belonged to the respective Annual Conferences within the limits of which the institution of slavery existed. But the more firm and determined supporters of the south went further in the range of their arguments, and appealed to holy writ in vindication of the existence of the institution. The debates closed by the adoption of the following resolution:

"Resolved, That in the judgment of this General Conference the holding of slaves is not, under all circumstances, a sin against God, yet in our opinion, under some circumstances, it is sinful, and in such cases should be discouraged by the Methodist Protestant Church. This General Conference does not feel authorized by the constitution to legislate on

the subject of slavery; and by a solemn vote we present the church our judgment, that the different Annual Conferences respectively should make their own regulations on this subject, so far as authorized by the constitution."

This resolution did not satisfy the ultraists of the north, nor was it agreeable to some of the delegates from the south, who were opposed to intermeddling with the subject, and a protest bearing a few names was recorded on the journal against it.

At this General Conference the periodical established as the organ of the church, and called the "Methodist Protestant and Family Visiter," was changed in name to that of "Methodist Protestant." Rev. E. Y. Reese was elected editor, but subsequently resigned. The services of the Rev. Augustus Webster were afterwards secured by the book committee, and the editorial department of the paper was filled by him until the sitting of the General Conference of 1846. During the period intervening between the General Conferences of 1838 and 1842, the friends of the book concern labored with commendable zeal to place it upon a safe and respectable footing. The financial condition of the country was such that the demand for books was small, but their devotion to the interests of the church was too great to be foiled even under the pressure of these circumstances. Through their devotion to its interests the concern was enabled to live.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1846.

The General Conference of 1846 met in the city of Cincinnati, on the first Tuesday in May. It was composed of seventy-one delegates from the following conferences:

Maine Conference—None in attendance.

Boston Conference—None in attendance.

Vermont Conference—Ziba Boyington, minister.

New York Conference—None in attendance.

Champlain Conference—None in attendance.

Onondaga Conference—Ira Hogan, minister.

Genesee Conference—S. M. Short, minister.

Pennsylvania Conference—None in attendance.

New Jersey Conference—None in attendance.

Maryland Conference—F. Waters, D. D., E. Henkle, J. S. Reese, L. R. Reese, J. Varden, I. Webster, U. Ward, J. R. Williams, T. Simm, ministers; W. Starr, A. L. Withers, T. R. Brown, J. Shriver, J. B. Matthews, laymen.

Virginia Conference—R. B. Thompson and John J. Whitfield, ministers.

North Carolina Conference—William Bellamy, W. H. Wills, John Paris, ministers; Spier Whitaker, layman.

South Carolina Conference—None in attendance.

Alabama Conference—None in attendance.

Huntsville Conference—Henry Stilwell, minister; H. R. Beaver, layman.

Mississippi Conference—Enos Fletcher, minister; N. Whitehead, layman.

Louisiana Conference—Allen Rushing, minister.

Tennessee Conference—R. W. Morris, minister; James L. Armstrong, layman.

Arkansas Conference—None in attendance.

Indiana Conference—D. H. Stephens, Cyrus Jeffries, ministers; William Smith, layman.

Illinois Conference—John Clarke, jr., W. H. Collins, ministers; Joel Rice, C. Rice, layman.

Muskingum Conference—C. Springer, Z. Ragan, J. Dalby, jr., J. Burns, G. Claney, R. Andrew, J. Thrap, ministers; J. Bell, S. Rodman, W. B. Kerlin, T. Campbell, A. W. Beatty, laymen.

Ohio Conference—A. H. Bassett, R. M. Dalby, J. White, J. E. Wilson, ministers; James Foster, D. C. Carson, M. Kennedy, laymen.

Pittsburg Conference—G. Brown, W. Reeves, P. T. Laishly, F. A. Davis, J. Cord, ministers; J. H. Deford, F. H. Pierpont, J. W. Philips, C. Craig, laymen.

Michigan Conference—James Gay, minister; H. Brownson, layman.

The Rev. Francis Waters, of the Maryland Conference, was elected president, and Rev. James E. Wilson and Rev. A. H. Bassett, of the Ohio Conference, secretaries.

At this session of the General Conference but few alterations of the Discipline were made, and those principally of minor importance. It was believed by that body that but few alterations or amendments were needful, and that that period was not an auspicious one for effecting changes.

A question now came up from the Maryland Conference, requesting the General Conference to express its opinion upon the constitutionality of the action of that body (the Maryland Conference) with regard to the "Mission Rule." The Annual Conference had changed the St. John's Station in Baltimore into a mission, and doubts were entertained by many as to the constitutionality of the measure. The General Conference declared the action of the Maryland Conference in the premises to be *un-constitutional*. The committee to whom the request of the Maryland Annual Conference was referred

were divided in their sentiments. Majority and minority reports were made. Excited and animated debates ensued upon proposed alterations of the mission rule. A substitute offered by Dr. Waters was finally adopted, which changes the preceding rule in some of its features, by granting to Annual Conferences more discretionary powers than they had heretofore possessed with respect to fields of missionary labor.

The abolitionists also labored hard to get some rule adopted by the General Conference upon the subject of slavery. Various resolutions, amendments and substitutes were offered. Highly excited debates ensued; the speakers being principally the ultraists and conservatives of the north. The former insisting upon the right and propriety of the General Conference in taking action in the premises or of expressing an opinion thereon; the latter took the ground that the General Conference had no constitutional right to meddle with the subject; that it legitimately belonged to the respective Annual Conferences where it existed, and that the General Conference had no right to trammel their action by the expression of an opinion in its legislative capacity. The following resolution, offered by Dr. J. S. Reese, was adopted, after one or two others had been laid on the table, and another one read and withdrawn:

“Resolved, that in the judgment of this General Conference the holding of slaves is, under many circumstances, a sin against God, and in such cases

should be condemned by the Methodist Protestant Church; nevertheless, it is our opinion that under some circumstances it is not sinful. This General Conference does not feel authorized by the constitution to legislate on the subject of slavery, and by a solemn vote we present to the church our judgment that the different Annual Conferences, respectively, should make their own regulations on this subject, so far as authorized by the Constitution."

Some of the delegates from the south protested against being called upon to vote on this subject; the yeas and nays having been demanded, upon the call of each name by the secretary, those who protested against the action in the premises gave their reasons for their vote as they saw proper under the circumstances.

A favorable report of the financial condition of the book concern and church paper was made by the book committee. The Rev. E. Y. Reese was elected editor of the "Methodist Protestant" and book agent for the ensuing four years. The salary of the editor it was resolved should be not less than nine hundred dollars; and he was allowed to have the assistance of a clerk appointed by the book committee, whose salary and duties are to be prescribed by the board.

As we have not at hand the report of the book committee to the General Conference, we shall here introduce the report of that committee to the last session of the Maryland Annual Conference, held March, 1849. The book concern being located

within the bounds of that conference, the committee are required to report annually to that body, as well as to each session of the General Conference.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE BOOK CONCERN.

*To the president and members of the Maryland Annual Conference, in conference assembled.*

Beloved Brethren,—The directors of the Methodist Protestant Church Book Concern, in obedience to the requirements of the Discipline, take occasion to present to the Maryland Annual Conference, now in session in Alexandria, their report of proceedings for the past conference year, together with a statement showing the true condition of the concern at the present time.

By a reference to the report of the directors, rendered to the last session of the conference, it will be seen that the concern was then worth \$4,129 76; the present report will show that, by the assistance of kind friends and a successful business during the year, the concern has nearly doubled its value, and is now worth \$8,250 32. In our last report we informed the conference that we had decided on stereotyping the hymn book. This has been accomplished at a cost of four hundred dollars, and will save the expense of composition in all future editions for at least twenty years to come. The first edition worked off from the plates numbered 3,000 copies, of which we have sold 2,200, in addition to 700 which were on hand at the date of our last report, making in all 2,900 copies.

Of the Discipline there have been sold 2,300 copies, and of Clarke's Commentary 56 sets. Were our friends to purchase this work freely, its sales would greatly advance the pecuniary interests of the church; for although we furnish the work at a much lower price than that at which any similar work can be purchased in the United States, it nevertheless yields a handsome profit. The whole amount of books sold during the conference year was \$4,005 89; of this a large proportion remains uncollected, but it is a favorable indication that our receipts on account of book debts during the year amount to \$3,972. At the commencement of the year our ledger showed an indebtedness to the concern of about \$3,000, after making due allowances for losses; and at the present about the same amount, with equal allowance, is due us; so that our receipts on book accounts the present year are equal, within a fraction, to the amount of sales effected. But we do not say this in justification of those who are culpably negligent.

The financial condition of the paper is still improving, but less rapidly than could be desired. At the last report there were 2,800 subscribers on the list, of whom we have been compelled to erase the names of several hundred for non-payment; but by the addition of new subscribers the present list is within a fraction of 3,000.

The total receipts during the past year on the paper, including old dues, are \$4,195 28; on the present (15th) volume the receipts have been light,



only \$1,753. It is hoped, however, that as in former cases, the close of the year will bring up the deficiency.

The expenses for publishing the paper are about the same as for the preceding volume, say \$3,500. The profits on the present volume, it is thought, will be in the neighborhood of one thousand dollars. On volume 14th the collections have covered the entire expense of its publication, so that payments hereafter on that volume and all preceding volumes, will be placed among the actual profits of the concern.

#### ASSETS.

The stereotyped plates were passed into our hands at an	
estimated value of . . . . .	\$5,150 00
Hymn Book plates cost . . . . .	400 00
Stock in hand, valued at . . . . .	2,250 00
Due by present subscribers to Methodist Protestant to the	
end of present volume, after deductions for bad debts,	4,100 00
Discontinued subscribers, . . . . .	700 00
Collectable book debts, . . . . .	3,000 00
Cash on hand, . . . . .	241 00
	<hr/>
	\$15,841 00

#### LIABILITIES.

Mortgage to S. A. F. S. of Maryland Conference, . .	\$1,800 00
Notes payable in redemption of scrip, . . . . .	1,636 68
Sundry debts, . . . . .	1,900 00
Phebean Society, . . . . .	800 00
Interest to Phebean Society, . . . . .	54 00
Estimated expense of publishing Methodist Protestant to	
end of present volume, including half of salaries and rent,	1,400 00
	<hr/>
	\$7,590 68

## ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

Assets, . . . . .	\$15,841 00
Liabilities, . . . . .	7,590 68
Present worth of the concern at the former estimated value of the plates, . . . . .	<hr/> \$8,250 32

It will be recollected that in our last report to the conference there were sixty-eight shares of church scrip remaining unredeemed, amounting to \$3,400. We now purpose to inform the conference how the principal and interest of those shares of scrip have been disposed of. Sixteen shares (\$800), held by the Phebean Society, remain in possession of that society, and the interest paid annually. Sixteen shares (\$800), held by the S. A. F. Society have been canceled in the following manner: the managers of that society have relinquished the interest, and have taken a lien on the property of the book concern for the principle, together with \$1,000 due by the concern to W. Starr, which he assigned as a donation to said society, it being part of a loan of \$1,700 made by him two years ago, to enable the book committee to publish an edition of Clarke's Commentary. The payment of the whole \$1,800 to be made by installments of \$200 per annum, commencing on the first day of December, 1851, with interest from that date until the whole shall have been paid. Twenty-eight shares (\$1,400), held by Wesley Starr, have been canceled in the following manner: He relinquished or gave to the concern the interest due, \$805; he also gave to the concern \$350, which was due to him, and received

from the committee their notes for the balance, \$1,050, with interest till paid. The same brother gave to the concern \$350 of the amount loaned by him to publish Clarke's Commentary, subject, however, to the annual payment during his lifetime of \$20 for the benefit of the West Baltimore Station Sabbath School. Four shares (\$200), held by Edward Green, were purchased by the concern for \$145, and he relinquished or gave the interest due to the church. Four shares (\$200), held by William Savory's heirs, were purchased by the concern for \$200, and they relinquished the interest.

By the above statement the conference will perceive: 1st, That all the interest due on the scrip, amounting to the sum of \$1,300, has been relinquished to the church, and thus a heavy item of liability is for ever removed from the debtor side of our annual account. 2d, That the certificates of stock issued by the Methodist Protestant Church in 1839, except the few held by the Phebean Society, have been canceled; and 3d, That the debt on scrip has been so arranged by notes as to give the concern ample time to pay it, without embarrassing it in its other operations.

In connection with the above statement, the directors take pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of a donation of \$500, for the benefit of the Maryland Annual Conference, from a young lady who is a member of our church, and who on a former occasion bestowed a gratuity of \$1,000 to the concern subject to the annual payment of \$60 worth

of religious books. The conditions of the recent gratuity are: the directors of the book concern are to distribute annually to the itinerant preachers of the Maryland Annual Conference, thirty dollars worth of suitable books, so as to meet the necessities of young men in the ministry, who may be unable to purchase them. She also assigns to the directors the right to distribute \$30 worth additional, to be charged to the account of \$60 per annum, (life annuity,) to which she was entitled for the former donation. Should the concern at any future time prefer to return the \$500 to stop the annuity, they are authorized to pay the sum to the managers of the S. A. F. Society.

Dear brethren, permit us to conclude our report by an appeal to the good sense and benevolent feelings of the ministers and members of the Maryland Conference and those of the thirty-two Annual Conferences of the M. P. Church. Does it not appear to you, brethren, that so numerous a body of ministers and members, most of whom have means and opportunities to do much good, have done exceedingly *little* towards the establishment of a concern, the avowed design of which is, by the sale of books and the publication of a religious paper, to obtain annually a sum sufficiently respectable to distribute to each of the Annual Conferences at least one hundred dollars, to aid in making up deficiencies among the itinerant brethren who have not received the whole amount of their limited allowances?

The book concern has been in operation for ten years, under the direction of attentive, laborious men, whose services have been yielded gratuitously, and lo! such has been the apathy of the church, generally, that the concern just now begins to show signs of life and promises of future usefulness. Out of thirty-two conference districts we have at length obtained within a fraction of 3,000 subscribers, which is less than an average of 100 to each district, when, to speak within the bounds of moderation, the average ought to be at least 500 to each district. During the past year we have sold about \$4,000 worth of books, an average less than \$130 to each district, when any impartial man will say that five times the amount ought to have been purchased, especially as the profits are designed to benefit the purchasers, by aiding them to make up deficiencies in their own conferences. Can we not do better than we have done? or shall the same apathy which has benumbed and retarded the advancement of our little concern for so many years continue to arrest our progress and keep us down, until we become a reproach and a by-word among the thousands of Israel?

Again, dear brethren, does it not appear to you to be a burning shame that the subscribers and the purchasers of books should retain in their own hands nearly \$7,000 which are justly due to the concern? The directors tell you that the concern is worth \$8,250, but alas! almost the whole amount is away in the hands of their customers, and the

directors and agent left without means to pay off the printer and paper-maker. Do we not appear to you very much like certain rich men who have their thousands on paper, but have not money to buy their marketing? And does not the conduct of the whole church resemble the parent who professes great affection for the child, but denies it food and raiment?

It would encourage us who hold the laboring oar greatly if we could bring the ministry and membership to make suitable efforts towards carrying the concern up to a point whence it may be able to furnish the help designed by its founders and originators. Come, brethren, let us try if we cannot, during the coming year, greatly increase the subscription list, and further the sale of our church books.

The session of the General Conference is now at hand, to which body the directors of the book concern are required to give "a full and particular account of all matters and things connected with the church book concern." It would be very pleasant to all to have it in our power to exhibit the concern in a healthy and prosperous condition. Nothing can prevent so desirable a result but negligence on the part of the church. The brethren will doubtless excuse our great plainness in the preceding remarks when they take into view our anxiety to make the concern efficient in the securement of the great objects of its institution. All of which is respectfully submitted by the directory.

**JAMES R. WILLIAMS, *President.***

## BOUNDARIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCES.

The General Conference of 1846 recognized the following twenty-nine Annual Conference Districts, their boundaries being as follow :

**MAINE DISTRICT** includes all the State of Maine.

**BOSTON DISTRICT** includes all the States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire.

**VERMONT DISTRICT** commences at the south-east corner of the State of Vermont, and runs thence, westwardly, to Lansingburg, on the North river (leaving that town in the New York District); thence, westwardly, to the south-west corner of Montgomery and Fulton counties; thence, from the north-west corner of Fulton county, eastwardly, opposite the towns of Athol and Johnsburg, as far north as the south line of Elizabethtown; thence, eastwardly, along the south line of Elizabethtown to lake Champlain; thence down the lake to the Canada line; thence to the north-west corner of New Hampshire; and thence to the place of beginning.

**NEW YORK DISTRICT** includes the State of Connecticut, and that part of the State of New York lying south-east of a line beginning at the north-west corner of Montgomery county; thence, eastwardly, to Lansingburg, on the North river, including that town; thence, south, by said river, to Troy; and thence, eastwardly, to the north-west corner of Massachusetts, including Long and Staten islands.

**ONONDAGA DISTRICT** commences at the point where the old pre-emption line intersects Lake

Ontario, and runs thence, southwardly, bounding on the Genesee District, to the line of the Pennsylvania District ; thence, along said line, so far as to embrace Cherry Valley and Westford Circuits, and all the territory west and south of the county of St. Lawrence (with the exception of Twin Circuit) ; thence, in a north-westwardly direction, to the Oswego river ; and thence, by lake Ontario, to the place of beginning.

GENESEE DISTRICT commences at the point where the old pre-emption line intersects Lake Ontario, and runs thence in a direct line to the foot of Seneca lake ; thence, up the middle of said lake, to the line of Pennsylvania District ; thence, west, to the north-west corner of said district ; thence, south, to the southern boundary line of the State of New York ; thence, by said State line, to Lake Erie ; and thence, by said lake, the Niagara river, and Lake Ontario, to the place of beginning

MICHIGAN DISTRICT includes the State of Michigan and the northern tier of counties in the State of Indiana.

INDIANA DISTRICT includes all the State of Indiana, except the part embraced in the Michigan District.

ILLINOIS DISTRICT commences at the north line of Township No. 4, on the Mississippi river, north of the base line, running due east to the Indiana line ; embracing all the southern part of the State and all that part of Missouri not included in the Arkansas District.



**NORTH ILLINOIS DISTRICT** embraces all that portion of the State of Illinois not included in Illinois District and the territory of Wisconsin.

**IOWA DISTRICT** includes all the territory of Iowa west of the Mississippi river, and north of the States of Missouri and Arkansas.

**OHIO DISTRICT** includes that part of the State of Ohio lying west of the Sciota and Sandusky rivers, excepting the counties of Crawford, Seneca, Sandusky and Wyandott.


**MUSKINGUM DISTRICT** includes all that part of the State of Ohio not included in the Ohio District.

**PITTSBURG DISTRICT** includes that portion of the States of Virginia and Pennsylvania lying west of the Alleghany mountains.

**NEW JERSEY DISTRICT** includes the State of N. Jersey.

**PENNSYLVANIA DISTRICT** begins at the junction of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers and runs thence by a direct line to Harrisburg (including that city); thence by the Susquehanna river to the mouth of the Juniata; thence up the Juniata to the dividing line of Mifflin and Huntingdon counties; thence by a direct line due north into Alleghany county, N. Y., so far as to embrace Broome county by a line due east; thence by the north-east and east lines of Broome county to the Delaware, and thence by said river to the place of beginning.

**MARYLAND DISTRICT** includes all the State of Maryland and that part of Virginia not included in the Virginia District; the State of Delaware, and



all that part of Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna river not included in the Pittsburg District.

VIRGINIA DISTRICT includes all the State of Virginia not included within the Maryland and Pittsburg Districts.

NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT includes the State of North Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICT includes the State of South Carolina.

GEORGIA DISTRICT includes all the State of Georgia, except the counties of Decatur, Thomas, Lowndes, Ware and Camden.

FLORIDA DISTRICT includes all that part of Florida east of the Apalachicola river; and that part of Georgia not included in the Georgia District.

ALABAMA DISTRICT includes that part of Alabama not included in the Huntsville District, and that part of Florida west of Apalachicola river.

TENNESSEE DISTRICT includes all that part of Tennessee not included in the Huntsville District, and the State of Kentucky.

HUNTSVILLE DISTRICT commences at the southwestern corner of Lafayette county, Alabama, and runs eastward with the lines of Lafayette and Walker counties to the Black Warrior river; thence down said river to the south-western corner of Jefferson county; thence in a direct line across Shelby county to the south-west corner of Talladega county; thence eastward with the southern boundary line of Talladega and Randolph counties to the State of Georgia; thence northward with the

state line to the State of Tennessee; thence in a direct line to the nearest point of the Cumberland mountain, on the north side of Tennessee river; thence in such direction to the mouth of Cedar creek, in Perry county, as may be necessary to comprise all the country situated on the waters of Tennessee river, on the north side thereof, between the two points last designated, and all the country situated on the waters of Buffalo river above the mouth of Sinking creek, in Perry county; thence up Tennessee river (from the mouth of Cedar creek) to the line of the State of Alabama; thence southward with the said line of Alabama to the beginning.

MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT includes the State of Mississippi.

LOUISIANA DISTRICT includes the States of Louisiana and Texas.

ARKANSAS DISTRICT includes the State of Arkansas.

PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT includes all that part of the state of Pennsylvania east of the Susquehanna river (except Hummelstown Mission,) not included in the Pennsylvania District.

Two other Annual Conferences, viz: the Texas and Missouri, had been organized prior to the sitting of the General Conference of 1846, but the evidence of their organization failed to reach the General Conference, from some unforeseen cause, consequently their names and boundaries do not yet appear in the book of Discipline. Since then

another, the Wabash Conference, has been organized, making in all thirty-two Annual Conferences in the Methodist Protestant communion.

#### STATISTICS OF THE CHURCH.

The following table of statistics is taken in part from the reported or published minutes of conferences about the close of the year 1848 and the beginning of 1849. For want of later items of intelligence with regard to some of the conferences, we have had to copy from their minutes published one and two years ago. Consequently the total numerical strength of the church, as summed up in the table, no doubt falls considerably below the true or actual numbers.

There is a rule of Discipline, found on page 53, section 23d, which requires that "each Annual Conference shall publish its minutes, containing, 1. A list of all the appointments for the ensuing year. 2. A complete list of all the stationed and unstationed ministers and preachers within the district, and those who are superannuated. 3. The names of those ministers and preachers who have deceased, withdrawn, or been expelled. 4. The general exhibit of the conference steward. 5. The number of members, including ministers and preachers. 6. The time and place of holding the next Annual Conference; and the number of houses of worship belonging to the district." But we regret that some of the Annual Conferences have so overlooked this rule, that our statistical table is rendered meagre.

## STATISTICAL TABLE.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES	Stations.	Circuits.	Missions,	Itinerant Ministers and Preachers.	Unstationed Ministers and Preachers.	Members.	Meeting Houses.	Parsonages.
Maryland, . . . . .	8	29	3	56	67	6,500		5
Virginia, . . . . .	4	12	7	25		3,000	45	
North Carolina, . . .	1	10		26	24	4,030	46	
South Carolina, . . .	1	3	2	13	11	1,778	9	
Georgia, . . . . .		10	3	34	26	2,004	25	1
Florida, . . . . .	1	2	2	9	3	710	11	
Alabama, . . . . .	4	13	2	28	26	4,282	95	
Mississippi, . . . . .		5	1	23	15	1,096	38	
Louisiana, . . . . .		7		9	1	584		
Texas, . . . . .		3	6	12	3	500		
Arkansas, . . . . .		4	3	13	13	733		
Missouri, . . . . .		7	2	15		500		
Huntsville, . . . . .		6	4	22	14	876		
Tennessee, . . . . .		9	1	25	33	1,382	36	
Illinois, . . . . .		29	2	26	40	1,995	13	4
North Illinois, . . . .	1	9	6	28	26	944	5	2
Iowa, . . . . .		4	5	11	10	380		
Michigan, . . . . .		16	1	29	30	1,680	3	
Wabash, . . . . .		9	1	23	15	1,210	5	2
Indiana, . . . . .		10	1	17	23	1,471	20	
Ohio, . . . . .	3	18	6	44	51	4,319	67	5
Muskingum, . . . . .	4	32	7	60	82	5,819	119	8
Pittsburg, . . . . .	8	29	6	50	63	5,799	55	7
Pennsylvania, . . . .		8	3	12	9	520	5	
Philadelphia, . . . . .	10			10	6	1,300		
Genesee, . . . . .	1	18	2	23	12	1,009	6	1
Onondaga, . . . . .		17	1	23	32	1,296	9	3
New York, . . . . .	8	19	2	31		1,409	20	
New Jersey, . . . . .		6	1	10	9	844	11	1
Boston, . . . . .	12	1		17	5	700	11	
Vermont, . . . . .	1	6	1	16	11	700	8	1
Maine, . . . . .		5		11	17	535		
	67	356	81	761	677	59,905	662	40

## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The progress of the Methodist Protestant Church has been onward. Prosperity has marked her course. Truly the Lord has done great things for her, whereof we are glad. In the preceding pages we have brought to view the untoward circumstances that gave birth to her organization—we have noticed the character of the persecutions gotten up by men in high places against those called “reformers,” and we have watched those persecuted few who *nobly refused* to abandon their principles of ecclesiastical polity, and thereby admit and acknowledge the exclusive claims of itinerant clerical supremacy—we saw them, when cast out of the church of their first love, rally together and unite themselves in a bond of Christian brotherhood under the banners of mutual rights. And though their organizations were “*few and far between*,” yet tracing their history we find that in twenty years this little company has become a great army. The principles of reform have outlived the war of persecution that once so madly raged. There have been a few of the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church who have talked and written of “the Methodist Protestant Church being a failure,” that “the cause was going down,” &c. But her failure (if it be called such) consists in the onward march of her principles, a rapid increase of membership, and the influence and usefulness of her ministry. And as to “the cause

going down," we would remark, in the language of the Rev. Asa Shinn, who, having heard such a remark made upon a certain occasion, replied, "'Tis true it is going down, but, like the beautiful Ohio river, the further it goes the deeper and broader it becomes."

The Methodist Protestant Church is one of the fairest of the daughters of Zion. Her Constitution and Discipline secure to her ministry and membership *mutual rights*, and justly challenge the admiration of the world as a system of ecclesiastical polity. Her principles have been spreading and continue to spread. Christian people, becoming tired of itinerant supremacy, are throwing off such authority; and, resolved to think for themselves, are calling for the ministry and discipline of the M. P. Church. Very recently such calls have been made from the cities of New Orleans and Mobile; and within the last year large secessions from the M. E. Church have taken place in the western part of North Carolina, and flocking to the standard of the M. P. Church have organized themselves under her discipline. For these things and such as these some of the votaries of itinerant clerical supremacy in the former church take umbrage at the last mentioned church. It was but a few years ago that one of the ministers of the M. E. Church in North Carolina, speaking of the M. P. Church, declared over his own signature that "*she was like the vulture that preyed upon the carcasses of its own murdered victims;*" and "*like the wandering gipsey who refused to bring*

*up her own natural offspring, she seizes upon every straggling child upon which she can lay her hands, and bears it off to make it the dupe of her own base impositions."* \*

Alas! alas! what had become of that charity which hopeth all things when this *teacher* of the religion of Jesus penned the preceding sentences! But thank God we are happy to record that only a few of the ministry of the M. E. Church so far forget their calling and profession as to exhibit such a spirit, or breathe such sentiments towards the Methodist Protestant Church.

It is not necessary for us to declare the foregoing

\* Bigotry often sways the feelings of Methodists, as well as of other people, although Mr. Fletcher has said, "bigots are religious savages." Upon a certain occasion, a popular minister of the Methodist Protestant Church, traveling through a part of the country where he was but little known, called in a country village and was invited by a friend to preach in the Methodist Episcopal Church at night. The invitation was accepted. An old side brother, who was in the habit of giving utterance to his feelings under the preaching of the word, but not much distinguished for his charity towards Methodist Protestants, "shouted aloud" in the congregation during the sermon. On the next day, meeting with a friend, he inquired "who the minister was," with whom he had been so much delighted the preceding evening. On being told that he was a minister of the Methodist Protestant Church, he exclaimed, "Well, if I had known that, I would not have shouted last night!"

We relate these things not for the disparagement of the M. E. Church, but to afford a glance at the opposition that is sometimes exhibited by a *few*, within the pale of that communion, to the M. P. Church, and that, too, for an honest difference of opinion about church polity.



assertions which we have quoted, to be destitute of truth or the least semblance of truth; for history, observation, and facts all combine to contradict such assertions, and demonstrate to the world the *entire vanity* of all such declarations. And throwing the mantle of charity over all such men, the very best, as well as the mildest conclusion at which we can arrive, is simply this, that they are ignorant of the things whereof they write or speak.

Of the labor, zeal and usefulness of the ministry of the M. P. Church we leave the world to judge. Their efforts to promote the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, by winning souls to Jesus, have been abundantly owned and blessed of God. Extensive and glorious revivals of religion have crowned their labors in almost every part of the United States where their efforts have been directed. Believers have been edified and the church built up and strengthened. They inculcate the doctrines of free grace, and teach that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Zealously enforcing these principles, and firmly adhering to the Constitution and Discipline of the church, they can, they will succeed.

Thus far the Methodist Protestant Church has been abundantly blessed of God. May she ever be watered with the dews of heavenly grace, be instrumental in guiding millions of happy spirits to heaven, until this lovely daughter of Zion shall prove a praise and a blessing in the whole earth. Amen.

# APPENDIX.

CONTAINING A REVIEW OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, THE INTRODUCTION OF EPISCOPACY,  
AND THE EXCLUSION OF THE LAITY FROM THE  
COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH.

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## CHAPTER I.

**Episcopacy.**—Ordination among Methodist Preachers in Virginia in 1779.—Letter of Mr. Wesley to the American Methodists, dated September 10th, 1784.—Remarks upon the preceding letter.—Dr. Coke's letter of authority from Mr. Wesley.—Dr. Coke's letter to Mr. Wesley.—Charles Wesley to his brother John.—Extracts from Rev. Jesse Lee and Rev. James O'Kelley.

THE history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from its organization in 1784 down to the present period, demonstrates the fact that all the difficulties through which she has passed have had their origin in the nature of that system of ecclesiastical polity which she adopted, or rather which was adopted and palmed upon her by the two Britons,—Coke and Asbury,—under the professed sanction of Mr. Wesley's name.

In the economy of this government there are two points to which we invite the particular attention of the reader, viz: Episcopacy, and the exclusion of the laity from any participation whatever in the law or rule-making department of the church. Episcopacy is a subject that has had its advocates as well as opponents in almost every period of the history of the Christian church. Various definitions have been given of its prerogatives and powers as it exists among the different orders of Christians. The Church of Rome has her system of episcopacy. The Greek Church has hers also. The Church of England boasts of the scriptural authority of hers; and her eldest daughter, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, brings forward her

boastful pretensions to an "unbroken chain of *prelatical succession*" from the apostles down to the present period. And lastly, the Methodist Episcopal Church presents before us her system of episcopacy, into which we now propose to institute an inquiry as to its validity.

It is generally asserted by the writers of the Methodist Episcopal school that the government of that church is to be attributed to John Wesley, as its author and founder, so far as plan or system is concerned. The truth or justice of this position it is now our business to investigate. That John Wesley was the founder of Methodism in Europe is admitted on all sides, and that he likewise supplied the American Methodists for a few years with preachers sent over from England through his influence or by his authority, is equally true. But that he recommended the "episcopal form of government," we regard as altogether untenable, and it cannot be sustained by the facts in the case.

During the struggle of war between the American colonies and the mother country, a contest of opinion sprang up among the few Methodist preachers then in America, with regard to the administration of the ordinances of the church. At a conference held in Virginia, in 1779, the preachers, "feeling the want of the instituted means of grace among the societies," consulted together, and chose a committee for the purpose of ordaining ministers. The committee thus chosen first ordained themselves, and then proceeded to ordain and set apart other preachers for the same purpose, that they might administer the holy ordinances of the church of Christ.\* This movement produced a warm contention among the Methodist preachers, many of them opposing such a step as being informal and therefore invalid; and in order to settle the difficulty, it was agreed among them to desist from administering the ordinances for one year, and that Mr. Asbury should, in the space of that time, write to Mr. Wesley in England, and lay their situation before him and get his advice. This was in the year 1780. Mr. Wesley, in the year 1783, wrote a letter of advice to the Methodist societies, exhorting them to "abide by the Methodist doctrines and Discipline." But in the following

\* Lee's History of the Methodists, p. 69.

year, 1784, when peace had been established between the two countries, and the colonies had become independent states, and all British authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, being withdrawn, and at an end in America, Mr. Wesley seems to have taken new views with regard to the situation of the American Methodists, as the following circular letter to them will show :

BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 10th, 1784.

*To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America :*

1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the British empire, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the state Assemblies; but no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

2. Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our traveling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there are none either to baptize or administer the Lord's supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end: and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America. As also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act

as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper.

5. If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

6. It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the bishop of London to ordain one only; but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceeding; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state, and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God had so strangely made them free.

JOHN WESLEY.

The preceding letter is the only document that has ever been produced in this country bearing the signature of the Rev. John Wesley, having any relation to the organization of the Methodists in America into a church. The declaration has often been published to the world, that Mr. Wesley "preferred the episcopal form of church government to any other," and that consequently he had set apart and ordained Dr. Coke to the office of bishop. And we find in the Methodist Episcopal Church Discipline the following statement laid down as an exposition of the reasons and causes that led to the formation of that church, as well as the steps taken in the same :

"The preachers and members of our society in general being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the Church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the Christian sacraments, as several of the clergy had forsaken their churches, requested the late Rev. John Wesley to take such measures, in his wisdom and prudence, as would afford

them suitable relief in their distress. In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who, under God, had been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth by means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America; and for this purpose in the year 1784 sent over three regularly ordained clergy. But, preferring the *episcopal* mode of church government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz: *Thomas Coke*, doctor of civil law, late of *Jesus College*, in the University of Oxford, and a presbyter of the Church of England, for the *episcopal* office; and having delivered to him letters of *episcopal* orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart *Francis Asbury*, then general assistant of the Methodist society in America, for the same episcopal office, he, the said *Francis Asbury*, being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which, the said *Francis Asbury* was solemnly set apart for the said episcopal office, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the said *Thomas Coke*, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the General Conference held at Baltimore did unanimously receive the said *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* as their *bishops*, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination."—See Methodist Book of Discipline.

The preceding is the account which the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church give of her origin. Is it in accordance with the principles laid down and the statements made in the foregoing letter signed by *John Wesley*? It is not. The discrepancy is most palpable. The account in the Methodist Discipline says "he (*Mr. Wesley*) solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz: *Thomas Coke*, doctor of civil law, late of *Jesus College*, in the University of Oxford, and a presbyter of the Church of England, for the episcopal office." *Mr. Wesley* says, "*Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain.*" Now, upon this avowal of *Mr. Wesley*, *Dr. Coke* had as good a right to ordain *Mr. Wesley* to the episcopal office as *Mr. Wesley* had to ordain him. They were both presbyters in the Church of England, equal in office and equal in authority

so far as that office gave them authority in the church. In the account given in the Discipline, we find the words "episcopal" and "bishop," brought into use, but in Mr. Wesley's letter they are not to be found, so far as the organization of a "Methodist Episcopal Church" is concerned.

Mr. Wesley says, "I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint *superintendents* over our brethren in America." That Mr. Wesley never intended by the term "superintendent," in the preceding sentence, to convey the idea that is attached to the term "bishop," is certainly susceptible of the clearest proof. For, 1. When he spoke of the prelates or church dignitaries of the Church of England, of which he was a member, he never used the term "superintendent" as applicable to them at all, but invariably used the term "bishop." 2. Mr. Asbury, at the date of Mr. Wesley's letter, was nothing more than a lay preacher, consequently when Mr. Wesley said "I have appointed Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury to be *joint superintendents*," he could have had no reference whatever to the *ordination* of Dr. Coke to the episcopacy. 3. If Dr. Coke ever was ordained to the office of the episcopacy as taught and received by the Methodist Episcopal Church, it had been done prior to the date of Mr. Wesley's letter, which is entirely silent upon the subject. And lastly, all who are acquainted with the style and clearness of Mr. Wesley's sentences as a writer, must admit that he was too concise to use the word "superintendent," to represent the idea of the episcopal office in a theological sense.

That Mr. Wesley gave Dr. Coke a letter testimonial of his appointment as a "superintendent," we readily admit; but the words "episcopacy" and "bishop" are not to be found therein. As this novel document is to be found in Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, we shall transcribe it for the satisfaction of the curious.

To all whom these presents shall come: John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting:

Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England,

are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacrament of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usages of the same church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers,

Know all men that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And, therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands and prayers, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

JOHN WESLEY.

There are two points that deserve particular attention in the preceding document. First, that many of the Methodists in America who desired to continue under the care of Mr. Wesley, and "to adhere to the doctrines and discipline of the church of England, were distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the same church." From what is set forth in this item it is evident that those people still wished to adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England; consequently they desired no departure from her regulations; and of course neither desired nor expected to recognize any man in the character of "bishop," apart from those who derived their prelatical functions and authority from that church; and in order to meet these wants of the people, a man of Mr. Wesley's goodness of heart and rectitude of purpose could never have intended to place over them a man holding an office contrary to the principles of the established church. Secondly, that Mr. Wesley did set forth as a superintendent, by the imposition of his hands and prayers, Thomas Coke. Upon this point the question naturally arises, did Mr.



Wesley in this act consecrate or ordain Dr. Coke a bishop? The fair inference or answer is, he did not. If he had done so, his candor was such that he would have been free to declare it. But he uses neither of the terms, and merely states, "I have set apart," &c. If he had regarded Dr. Coke as a "superintendent" vested with the exclusive authority and prerogatives now claimed by "the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church," he would have felt free to recognize him in that character. But the reverse is true. Mr. Wesley had merely set apart Dr. Coke as a "superintendent," and not as a bishop. The object had in view in setting apart Dr. Coke was, as it appears, that he might visit the Methodists in America, under the sanction of Mr. Wesley's name and influence, and make arrangements in order to their being supplied with the "sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper." And as Mr. Wesley declared over his own signature, eight days after that setting apart, that Lord King's account of the primitive church had convinced him years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order, it would be doing him not only gross injustice, but charging him with folly, to assert that, entertaining such sentiments as this concerning ecclesiastical orders, he had set apart or ordained Dr. Coke (who was then a presbyter in the Church of England) to the office of bishop in the Methodist Church in America. He was a man whose intentions were too pure to lay himself liable to such a charge of duplicity. There is not an instance on record in which he called either Dr. Coke or Mr. Asbury "bishop." But he invariably opposed their assumption of that title, of which there is an ample amount of documentary testimony; and that opposition must have been for the reason that they were not bishops in his estimation, as they professed to be; or else his opposition to their use of the term rested upon improper grounds, which none will presume to assert.

We shall here introduce one of Mr. Wesley's biographers, Rev. Mr. Moore, to speak upon the point at issue. "With respect to the title of bishop, I know that Mr. Wesley enjoined the doctor and his associates, and *in the most solemn manner*, that it should not be taken. In a letter to Mrs. Gilbert, the widow of the excellent Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., of Antigua; a copy of which now lies before me, he states this in the strongest manner.

"In this and every deviation, I cannot be the apologist of Dr. Coke, and I can state, in contradiction to all Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Hampson have said, that Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things; nor was he the author of one line of all that Dr. Coke published in America on this subject. His views, on these points, were very different from those of his zealous son in the gospel. He knew that a work of God neither needed, nor could be aided, nor could recommend itself to pious minds by such additions." (Moore's Life of Wesley.)

The preceding testimony of Mr. Moore, Mr. Wesley's biographer, is to the point. It shows conclusively that Mr. Wesley did oppose the pretensions of "Dr. Coke and his associates" to the episcopacy, and consequently the terms, "*episcopacy*," "*episcopal*," and "*bishop*," so far as they are applied to the Methodist Church, are purely of American invention.

The "setting apart of Dr. Coke as superintendent," and the events that grew out of it, produced much dissatisfaction amongst the warmest friends and most ardent admirers of Mr. Wesley. Different views have been taken by many, with regard to the motives that influenced his actions, and prompted him to pursue the course so much deplored by his friends. At this period he was far advanced in life, being in his eighty-second year, a period of life in which the counsels and influence of others would most likely succeed in warping him aside from a policy to which he had long adhered, or cause him to abandon the well cherished principles of earlier days. His brother, Mr. Charles Wesley, speaking of this step says:

"'Twas age that made the breach, not he."

History seems to be silent, or at least ambiguous, with regard to the individual with whom the scheme originated, to "set apart Dr. Coke as a '*superintendent*,'" yet it appears, with all the force of a moral certainty, that after the subject had been entertained by Mr. Wesley he doubted the propriety of the measure. The clergymen who attended the conference at Leeds opposed the scheme.

Says Dr. Whitehead, "Mr. Fletcher was consulted by letter, who advised that a bishop should be prevailed upon, if possible,

to ordain them, (Coke and others,) and then Mr. Wesley might appoint them to such offices in the societies as he thought proper, and give them letters testimonial of the appointment he had given them. Mr. Wesley well knew that no bishop would ordain them at his recommendation, and therefore seemed inclined to do it himself. In this purpose, however, he appeared so languid, if not wavering, that Dr. Coke thought necessary to use some further means to urge him to the performance of it. Accordingly, August 9, Mr. Wesley being then in Wales on his way to Bristol, the doctor sent him the following letter:

HONORED AND DEAR SIR,—The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey, for the following reasons: 1. It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches. 2. I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed that he would not receive any person deputed by you with any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him, or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find any, the least degree of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury, on the contrary a very great love and esteem, and am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against all events, and an authority formally received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people, and my exercising the office of ordination without that formal authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any account; I would therefore earnestly wish you would exercise that power in this instance, which I have not the shadow of a doubt but God hath invested you with for the good of our connexion. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will in any degree use the power you are pleased to invest me with, further than I believe is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. 3. In respect of my brethren (bro.

Whatcoat and Vasey), it is very uncertain indeed whether any of the clergy mentioned by brother Rankin will stir a step in the work, except Mr. Jarrett; and it is by no means certain that even he will choose to join me in ordaining; and propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me that every thing should be prepared, and every thing proper be done, that can possibly be done this side the water. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house, in your chamber; and afterwards (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. C. down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect to brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known or not known; if not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

Your most dutiful,

T. COKE.

This letter affords matter for several observations, both of the serious and comic kind; but I shall not indulge myself on the occasion it so fairly offers. The attentive reader who examines every part of it, will be at no loss to conjecture to whose influence we must impute Mr. Wesley's conduct in the present business.

"That Mr. Wesley should suffer himself to be so far influenced in a matter of the utmost importance, both to his own character and to the societies, by a man of whose judgment in advising, and talents in conducting any affair, he had no very high opinion, is truly astonishing, but so it was! Mr. Wesley came to Bristol, and September 1, every thing being prepared as proposed above, he complied with the doctor's earnest wish, by consecrating him one of the bishops, and Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey presbyters of the new Methodist Episcopal Church in America."\*

\* See Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. pp. 255-6.

Dr. Coke was ordained in the manner, and at the place, and under the circumstances suggested and insisted upon in his letter to Mr. Wesley. Can any one who has read the account, for a moment doubt with regard to the identity of the prime mover in this strange procedure? We find Dr. Coke petitioning for the office, and setting forth the steps that might be taken in bestowing that office upon him. In the next place, we find Mr. Wesley granting the asked for boon, according to the request of the petitioner, and Dr. Coke is set apart as a "*superintendent*." Up to this period the term "*bishop*," had not been applied to Dr. Coke. It was reserved to himself to take the initiative in the use of that term. Mr. Wesley has been much censured by his friends for the steps he took in the ordination or consecration of Dr. Coke, and by none more so than by his brother, Charles Wesley.

Dr. Whitehead, one of Mr. Wesley's biographers, in speaking of the ordination of Dr. Coke, uses the following language: "But Mr. Wesley was never publicly elected by any presbyters and people to the office of a bishop; nor ever consecrated to it; which made his brother Charles say:

'So easily are bishops made,  
By man's or woman's whim;  
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,  
But who laid hands on him?'

The answer is, no body. His episcopal authority was a mere gratuitous assumption of power to himself, contrary to the usage of every church, ancient or modern, where the order of bishops has been admitted. There is no precedent either in the New Testament or in church history that can justify his proceeding in this affair. And as Mr. Wesley had received no right to exercise episcopal authority, either from any bishops, presbyters, or people, he certainly could not convey any right to others: his ordinations, therefore, are spurious and of no validity.

"Nor can Mr. Wesley's practice of ordaining be justified by those reasons which Presbyterians adduce in favor of their own method of ordaining to the ministry; for Mr. Wesley ordained not as a presbyter, but as a bishop! his ordinations, therefore, were not presbyterian, nor will the arguments for presbyterian ordination apply to them.

"Let us review the arguments on this subject, reduced to a few propositions: 1. Mr. Wesley, in ordaining or consecrating Dr. Coke a bishop, acted in direct contradiction to the principle upon which he attempts to defend this practice of ordaining at all. 2. As Mr. Wesley was never elected or chosen by any church to be a bishop, nor ever consecrated to the office, either by bishops or presbyters, he had not the shadow of right to exercise episcopal authority in ordaining others, according to the rules of any church ancient or modern. 3. Had he possessed the proper right to ordain, either as a bishop or presbyter, (though he never did ordain as a presbyter,) yet his ordinations, being done in secret, were rendered thereby invalid and of no effect, according to the established order of the primitive church, and of all Protestant churches."\*

Mr. Charles Wesley, who had walked hand in hand as it were with his brother John, condemned in severe terms his policy and conduct, as well as the "*ambitious pursuits*" of Dr. Coke, as the following extract of a letter from him will show :

"I must not leave unanswered your surprising question, 'What then are you frightened at?' At the doctor's rashness and your supporting him in his ambitious pursuits—at an approaching schism as causeless and unprovoked as the American rebellion—at your own eternal disgrace, and all those frightful evils which your reasons describe. 'If you will go hand in hand with me, do.' I do go, or rather creep on in the old way in which we set out, and trust to continue in it until I finish my course. 'Perhaps if you had kept close to me, I might have done better.' When you took that fatal step at Bristol, I kept as close to you as close could be; for I was all the time at your elbow. You might certainly have done better if you had taken me in to be one of your council.

"I thank you for your intention to remain my friend. Herein my heart is as your heart. Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder. We have taken each other for better for worse, till death do us part?—no, but eternally unite. Therefore, in the love which never faileth, I am,

"Your affectionate friend and brother, C. WESLEY."

\* See Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii, p. 269.

We will now follow Dr. Coke to America, and notice his movements in this country in reference to his new station as superintendent. Jesse Lee says, in his history of the Methodists:

"As soon as Dr. Coke landed in America, he laid his plan to meet Mr. Asbury as soon as possible, and traveling from New York to Philadelphia, and then down into the Delaware state, he met with Mr. Asbury at Barret's chapel on the 14th of the same month. They then consulted together about the plan which Mr. Wesley had adopted and recommended to us. After the business was maturely weighed, and sufficient time was taken to consult some more of the preachers who were present on that day, it was judged advisable to call together all the traveling preachers in a general conference, to be held at Baltimore, at Christmas.

"Mr. Freeborn Garrison undertook to travel to the south, in order to give notice to all the traveling preachers of this intended meeting. But being fond of preaching by the way, and thinking he could do the business by writing, he did not give timely notice to the preachers who were in the extremities of the work, and of course several of them were not at the conference.

"December 27th, 1784.—The thirteenth conference began in Baltimore, which was considered to be a General Conference, in which *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* presided.

"At this conference we formed ourselves into a regular church, by the name of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, making at the same time the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent amenable to the body of ministers and preachers."

From this statement of Mr. Lee it is evident that only a small attendance of the preachers was had at the Baltimore Conference when the organization of the "Methodist Episcopal Church" took place.

Mr. Asbury in his journal says, "Friday, 24th (December), rode to Baltimore, where we met a *few preachers*; it was *agreed* to form ourselves into an episcopal church, with superintendents, elders and deacons. When the conference was seated, Dr. Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the superintendency of the church. *We were in great haste, and did much business in a little time.*"

It is exceedingly strange that this body of men, convened for

the purpose of transacting business of such vast importance to the spiritual interests of thousands, should act in such "great haste." But perhaps these two Britons, Coke and Asbury, in order that their favorite plans might be adopted in that body, found it most expedient, as the presiding officers of the conference, to do "much business in a little time."

We shall here introduce another witness who was present at the Baltimore Conference of 1784, viz: Rev. James O'Kelley. This distinguished minister in his "Apology" speaks thus:

"And it came to pass in the year of our Lord 1784, in the twelfth month, the traveling preachers were called together to the great city of Baltimore, to consider the contents of the circular letter.

"2. We perceived the counsel given in the circular letter to be good; because we are directed to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church; and to stand fast in our liberties, seeing we were free from the power of kings and bishops. Amen.

"3. The conference unanimously agreed to separate from the Church of England; and therefore we formed our religious societies into an independent church. The title was the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"4. The term episcopacy did not set well on the minds of some, seeing Mr. Wesley assured us it was not apostolic. But Thomas explained it away, by that indefinite term 'Methodist Episcopacy.' We had episcopacy but no bishop.

"5. Thomas and Francis were our superintendents, as presiding elders, according to John's appointment. But they were not elected by the suffrage of conference, although it is so written in the book of Discipline."

We have now introduced two witnesses who attended the Baltimore Conference of 1784, when the organization of the M. E. Church took place. Mr. Asbury says, "we were in great haste and did much business in a little time." Mr. James O'Kelley says, "Thomas and Francis were our superintendents, as presiding elders, according to John's (Wesley's) appointment. But they were not elected by the suffrage of conference, although it is so written in the book of Discipline." Here Mr. O'Kelley joins issue with what is recorded in the book of Discipline. And



we think his assertions in this case worthy of all credit, as he was present at the Baltimore Conference, and was ordained to the office of elder during its session, and maintained a character of spotless purity until death. He declares that Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury were not elected to their offices, as superintendents of the church, by the suffrages of the conference. We have also introduced Rev. Jesse Lee, who (there being no evidence that we can gather of his being at the Baltimore Conference of 1784) says, "Mr. Asbury was appointed a superintendent by Mr. Wesley, yet he would not submit to be ordained, unless he could be voted in by the conference: when it was put to vote he was unanimously chosen." But there is no evidence that we have been able to find in our researches that will go to show that Mr. Lee was at that conference, consequently he could not have spoken as an eye witness.

Again, it has been asserted, and with much show of reason and truth, that some of the general minutes of the early Methodist Conferences have been altered; and if so, it was not an impossibility for Jesse Lee to learn a different account of the manner in which Mr. Asbury came into office from that given by Rev. James O'Kelley. For instance, Mr. Lee tells us that at the Conference of 1784 the following question and answer were adopted:

"Q. 2. What can be done in order to the future union of the Methodists?

"A. During the life of the Rev. John Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands," &c.

And that at the conference of 1787 this engagement was left out of the minutes.

Again, the same author tells us that "in the course of this year (1787) Mr. Asbury reprinted the general minutes, but in a different form from what they were before." That they (the superintendents) gave themselves the title of bishop, in the minutes. That "they changed the title themselves without the consent of conference," &c.

Now taking this view of the case, we are forced to the natural conclusion that inasmuch as those two Britons, who would be American bishops, could presume to alter or change the "general

minutes," the account given by Mr. O'Kelley, who was an eye witness, is to be preferred to that of Rev. Jesse Lee, who was probably not there; and that "they (Coke and Asbury) were not elected by the suffrage of conference although it is so written in the book of Discipline."

But the reader may inquire, may we not place implicit reliance upon the assertion of Mr. Asbury, when he says "Dr. Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the superintendency of the church?" To which we reply that Mr. Asbury, in the printed general minutes for 1787, left out the term "superintendent," and inserted "bishop" in its place, without any authority for doing so.\* Therefore we come to the conclusion that, if Mr. Asbury could allow himself such latitude in the use of terms, it was not a difficult affair for him to write down the term or phrase in his journal, "unanimously elected," when the plain import of the transaction was nothing more than being "unanimously" received by the conference as one of the superintendents of the church.

It will be borne in mind by the reader that Mr. Asbury was brought up and educated in "a land of kings and bishops," in which elections, according to the common acceptation of that word, are not much in vogue; and consequently, inasmuch as he belonged to the British school, his ideas of "election" were not of the American mould. It is well known that he was not an admirer of "elections," even in the General Conference, and the part that he and his friends acted in that body at its session in Baltimore, in 1792, in opposition to the measure proposed allowing the preachers the right of appeal to the conference from the appointment of the bishop, if they thought themselves injured by his appointment, goes to show his anti-republican feelings. Mr. Asbury and his adherents advocated the absolute authority of the "one-man-power," the bishop, upon that occasion, and defeated the measure proposed. It was the principles laid down and the doctrines advanced by Mr. Asbury and his friends, upon this occasion, that induced the Rev. William McKendree (afterwards bishop), the Rev. James O'Kelley, and several other traveling ministers, to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

\* See Lee's History of the Methodists, page 128.

Therefore, under all the circumstances we are fully persuaded that the Rev. James O'Kelley spoke what he *knew* to be true, when he said, "*Thomas and Francis were our superintendents, as presiding elders, according to John's appointment ; but they were not elected by the suffrages of conference, although it is so written in the book of Discipline.*"

## CHAPTER II.

Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury assume the title of bishop.—Remarks upon the same.—Letter from Mr. Wesley to a friend.—Letter from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury, remonstrating with him about the title “bishop.”—Letter from Dr. Coke to Bishop White of Philadelphia, proposing a union of the Methodist and Episcopalian Churches.—Letter from Bishop White to one of his friends.—Dr. Coke’s certificate to the conference.—Dr. Coke’s letter to Mr. Wilberforce, soliciting the appointment of bishop in connexion with the Church of England to India.—Remarks upon the foregoing.

FROM what has been brought to view in the preceding chapter, it is evident that the pretensions of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to the episcopacy rest upon grounds both strange and unreasonable. And if we extend our inquiries still further, we shall discover that the position occupied by these two men is such as may well excite in the bosom of the reader a sympathetic feeling for some of the traits that belong to man’s fallen nature. Mr. O’Kelley tells us that “about the year 1787 Francis directed the preachers whenever they wrote to him to title him bishop. They did so: and this was the beginning of our spurious episcopacy.” Up to this time the title of “bishop” had not been used in the Methodist Episcopal Church; the two superintendents were known only as such, but it seems they coveted quite a different title, and in order to receive that title, were willing to condescend so low as to take the initiative steps themselves. What a humiliating thought! But again we propose to call up another witness to testify on this point. Rev. Jesse Lee says: “In the course of this year (1787) Mr. Asbury reprinted the general minutes; but in a different form from what they were before. \* \* \* \* This was the first time that our superintendents ever gave themselves the title of bishop in the minutes. They changed the title themselves, without the consent of the conference; and at the next conference they asked the preachers if the word bishop might

stand in the minutes; seeing it was a Scripture name, and the meaning of the word *bishop* was the same with that of *superintendent*.

"Some of the preachers opposed the alteration, and wished to retain the former title; but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word *bishop* remain."

Here, then, we have a concise history of the manner in which episcopacy crept into the Methodist Episcopal Church. "Francis directed the preachers when they wrote to him to title him *bishop*! This was the first time our superintendents ever *gave* THEMSELVES the title of *bishop* in the minutes. They changed the title *THEMSELVES without the consent of the conference!!!*" Why was this done? Were they in truth and in fact bishops, and did the church or the conference withhold from them their rightful titles? We think not. Was this act of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury intended to promote the prosperity of the church or the cause of Christianity? Surely it was not. The church had not thought proper to call them bishops. The conference had not thought proper to call them bishops. Therefore they were not regarded as bishops. But they "*gave themselves the title of BISHOP in the minutes,*" "*without the consent of the conference*" Again, "at the next conference they asked the preachers if the word *bishop* might stand in the minutes;" thus was the favor asked, and thus the much loved object gained. What a charm there must have been in that name! Is not this without a parallel in all ecclesiastical history? Where shall we find upon record a transaction amongst the ministers of Protestant churches that exhibits so much of the spirit of arrogance and of self-elevation? But however pleasing this title may have been to the fancy of these two Englishmen, it appears from the testimony that we shall hereafter introduce in its proper place, that Dr. Coke, at least, whom we shall designate as the father of Methodist episcopacy, was far, very far from being satisfied with his claims to legality in the episcopal office.

The conference of 1784 had adopted the following as one of their binding rules: "During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands;" and, strange to relate, the conference of 1787, which granted the

request of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, that the word "bishop" might stand upon the minutes in the room of "superintendent," left off from their printed minutes this solemn *acknowledgment* and *obligation* entered into. What could have been the motives that led to this act? Was it not feared that his influence or authority over the preachers would operate against the *new-born* episcopacy of the two superintendents? But this is not all; for we find from various sources of high and unquestionable authority, that the name of the Rev. Mr. Wesley was also left off the minutes of conference at the same time. In order to give the reader an idea of the feelings of the venerable Wesley under such treatment from those of whom he had a right to expect better things, we shall insert a copy of an extract of a letter written by Mr. Wesley to Rev. Beverly Allen, and first published by Rev. Wm. Hammett of Charleston, South Carolina, in 1792.

LONDON, OCTOBER 31st, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The point you desire my thoughts upon is doubtless of no common importance. And I will give you my settled thoughts concerning it without the least disguise or reserve. Indeed this has been always my manner of speaking when I speak of the things of God. It should be so now in particular, as these may probably be the last words that you will receive from me.

It pleased God sixty years ago, by me, to awaken and join together a little company in London, whence they spread throughout the land. Sometime after I was much importuned to send some of my children to America, to which I cheerfully consented. God prospered their labors; but they and their children still esteemed themselves one family, no otherwise divided than as Methodists on one side of the Thames are divided from the other. I was therefore a little surprised when *I received some letters from Mr. Asbury, affirming that no person in Europe knew how to direct those in America.* Soon after he flatly refused to receive Mr. Whatcoat in the character I sent him.

He told George Shadford, "Mr. Wesley and I are like Cæsar and Pompey,—he will bear no equal, and I will bear no superior." And accordingly he quietly sat by, until his friends, by common

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has not given me.”\* Therefore we assume the position that “the full validity of Methodist episcopacy” never has been, and never can be proved by any act or acknowledgment on the part of Mr. Wesley; but the vanity and nothingness of the thing, as well as the unreasonable and improper pretensions and claims of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to the title of “*bishop*,” by the declarations of Mr. Wesley over his own proper name, we regard as being easily established.

Soon after the transactions that took place in the conference of 1787 became known in England, and Mr. Wesley was fully apprised that Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury had so arranged matters in America, and that they were wearing the dignified and prelatical title of “*bishop*,” he wrote to Mr. Asbury the following letter:

LONDON, SEPTEMBER 20, 1788.

There is indeed a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to *all* the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am under God the father of the whole family. Therefore I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore I in a measure provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide were it not for me—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but support him in so doing.

But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be *little*, you study to be *great*. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college. Nay, and call it after your own names! O, beware! Do not seek to be *something*! Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all.

One instance of this your greatness has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a *bishop*? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call me a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a *bishop*! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

\* Whitehead's Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 227.



Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart; and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother.\*

JOHN WESLEY.

Can any man suppose that the pious and venerable Wesley, of morals so pure, of intentions so upright, could thus address one whom he regarded as a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in a valid or legitimate sense? Never; no, never. Can any one believe that Mr. Wesley would appoint or ordain Coke and Asbury bishops in the church, and then say to them, "men may call me a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a bishop?" Surely not. That illustrious man, who was great in goodness, could not be guilty of such inconsistency and impropriety of conduct. His letter to Mr. Asbury is a sharp one. He saw the effort on the part of the two superintendents to elevate themselves in the church, by departing from what he conceived to be the sphere of duty and propriety; and as the case was a desperate one, the honest, frank and sharp rebuke contained in the preceding letter, was the remedy he saw proper to offer. Therefore we arrive at the conclusion, from the language of the letter above, that "the full validity of episcopacy, as exclusively derived from Mr. Wesley," is not to be found in the Methodist Episcopal Church. If Mr. Wesley had created Dr. Coke a "bishop," it would have been folly in the extreme for him to say to Mr. Asbury, "for my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this." But, ah! the much-loved title was not put away.

From Lee's History of the Methodists we learn that in the year 1789 "the bishops introduced a question into the annual minutes which was as follows:

"Q. Who are the persons that exercise the episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America?

"A. John Wesley, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession."

The reader will bear in mind that in 1787 the name of Mr. Wesley had been left out of the minutes, and no reason assigned

\*See Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii, p. 285.

for the same. And we now find his name two years afterwards restored to the minutes as one of the persons filling or exercising the episcopal office in Europe and America. The fallacy of this declaration is obvious, and the inconsistency involved, is most glaring, when we recall to mind the declarations of Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury the preceding year:—"Men may call *me* a *knave*, a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a bishop!" and added, "For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!" Strange to relate, these two Britons, with these declarations of Mr. Wesley as it were still ringing in their ears, after having two years before left off his name from their minutes, now bring it back, and not only reinstate it, but place it with their own in the answer to the above question; and generations to come are to understand, from that, that John Wesley was one of the bishops of the Methodist Church in Europe and America; a name which he held in more abhorrence than he did that of *rascal* or *scoundrel*.

Mr. Lee says: "The bishops introduced this question into the minutes;" therefore we are left to understand that the conferences had no hand in the strange affair. As we do not pretend to know the heart of any man, we shall not undertake to determine the object had in view by these American "superintendents," in placing the name of the Rev. John Wesley with theirs as one of the bishops of the Methodist Church. It is enough to say it suited their purpose, therefore *they* did it. But perhaps some adherent of the ancient order of things might argue, as Dr. Emory once did, in order to evade a difficulty, "They did enter him as exercising the episcopal office, but they did not entitle him bishop." To which we would answer in the language of the Rev. A. McCaine, "To deny that Mr. Wesley was a bishop, merely because he was only entered 'as exercising the episcopal office,' is to deny that Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury were bishops, for they were entered in the same way in the same answer. If, therefore, it was necessary to constitute Mr. Wesley a bishop to enter him by that title, it was equally necessary to enter Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury by that title to constitute them bishops."\*

\* Defence of the Truth, page 114.

From the testimony which we have produced and laid down upon the preceding pages of this chapter, it must be apparent to every candid reader that the Rev. John Wesley can with no degree of fairness be called the author or father of *American Methodist Episcopacy*. And as Dr. Coke is said to be the first born son in that line, we shall now proceed to show that even he placed very little if any confidence in his claims to the legality of his birthright—the episcopacy.

Messrs. Coke and Asbury might state, as they had set forth in the Annual Minutes of 1789, that the persons “who exercised episcopal office in Europe and America were John Wesley Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession;” but knowing, as he well did, the firmness with which Mr. Wesley repudiated all such pretensions and claims to the title of “bishop,” and as he professed to derive his claims to that office upon Mr. Wesley’s authority, he had ample reasons for becoming dissatisfied with the validity of his “title,” which was as unsubstantial as a “gilded toy,” according to the principles laid down and the definitions given by the best writers upon ecclesiastical usages. Early in the year 1791 Dr. Coke opened a correspondence with Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, who was then a resident at Philadelphia. The object proposed in his correspondence was a union of the Methodist with the Protestant Episcopal Church; the re-ordination of the ministers who had been ordained by himself and Mr. Asbury; “there was also suggested by him a *propriety*, but not a *condition made, of admitting to the episcopacy* himself and the gentleman associated with him in the superintendence of the Methodist societies.” As this correspondence of Dr. Coke with the bishop is calculated to throw much light upon the subject, with regard to the views he entertained of his ordination to the episcopacy, we shall transcribe his letter.

RIGHT REVEREND SIR,—Permit me to intrude a little upon your time, upon a subject of great importance.

You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that church, For many years I was prejudiced, even I think to bigotry,

in favor of it; but through a variety of causes and incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went further *in the separation* of our church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place. He being pressed by our friends on this side the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few clergy of the Church of England in the states,) *went farther, I am sure, than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed.* And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

But what can be done for a reunion, which I wish for, and to accomplish which, Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people, is very strong towards him, notwithstanding *the excessive ill usage he received from a few.* My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily, and to the utmost, be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to re-unite.

It is even to your church an object of great importance. We have now above 60,000 adults in our society in these states; and about two hundred and fifty traveling ministers and preachers; besides a great number of local preachers, far exceeding the number of traveling preachers, and some of these local preachers are men of very considerable abilities; but if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their church, viz—by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship, they will make a larger body than you possibly conceive. The society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average, to give us our stated congregations, which will then amount to 300,000. And if the calculation, which I think some eminent writers have made, be just, that three-fifths of mankind are unadult, (if I may use the expression,) at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults, which form our congregations in these states amount to 750,000. About one-fifth of these are blacks

The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia ; and in breadth, from the Atlantic to Lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holstein, Kentucky, Cumberland, &c.

But there are many hindrances in the way. Can they be removed?

1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I do not think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a reordination, if other hindrances were removed out of the way. I must here observe that between sixty and seventy only, out of the two hundred and fifty, have been ordained presbyters, and about sixty deacons (only.) The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2 The preachers would hardly submit to re-union if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended upon the present bishops in America. Because, though they are all, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides they would argue, if the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a re-union is so sincere and earnest, that these difficulties make me tremble; and *yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success*; for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well as in Europe, is I doubt not increasing, yet *Mr. Asbury whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply ; nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.*

In Europe, where some steps had been taken tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday, the 17th of May. If this be agreeable, I'll beg of you just to signify it in a note directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market street, Philadelphia; or if you please by a few lines sent me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers', Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw; and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge upon the subjects.

I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the

present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley, be circumstantially known. I must therefore beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw, till I have the honor of seeing you.

Thus you see that I have made a bold venture on your honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

I have notwithstanding been guilty of inadvertences. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarrett, which gave him great satisfaction; and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew.

When I was last in America, I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazine, indeed almost every thing that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating him that no part of them might be printed which could be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry; and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgments more public—though Mr. Jarrett does not desire it.

I am not sure whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw of the use of one of your churches, about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did offend, (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said to Mr. Richard Dallam of Abingdon,) I sincerely beg yours and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I'll endeavor to amend. But, alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor: that if you have no thought of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter and take no more notice of it, (for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated from each other, if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent

wishes desire,) but if you will further negotiate business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the meantime permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself, right reverend sir,

Your very humble servant in Christ,

THOMAS COKE.

The Rt. Rev. Father in God, BISHOP WHITE.

*Richmond, April 24, 1791.*

P. S. You must excuse interlineations, &c. I am just going into the country and have no time to transcribe.

Dr. Coke in this letter to Bishop White having proposed an interview with that gentleman, accordingly waited upon him, upon his arrival in Philadelphia. The substance of the conversation that passed between them has been given to the world in a letter from Bishop White to one of his friends. The following is an extract.

PHILADELPHIA, JULY 30, 1804.

REVEREND SIR :

In the spring of the year 1791, I received a letter from Dr. Coke, on the subject of uniting the Methodist Society with the Protestant Episcopal Church. An answer was returned. In consequence of which, Dr. Coke, on his coming to town made me a visit, having not then received my letter, but having heard that I had written. Our conversation turned chiefly on the aforesaid subject. The general outlines of Dr. Coke's plan were a reordination of the Methodist ministers, and their continuing under the superintendence then existing, and on the practices of their peculiar institutions. There was also suggested by him a propriety, but not a *condition made, of admitting to the episcopacy*, himself and the gentleman associated with him in the superintendence of the Methodist societies. This intercourse was communicated at that time from Dr. Coke to Dr. Magaw. I do not know of any other person then informed of it, unless I may except the gentleman above alluded to, by whom, if I have been rightly informed, my letter to Dr. Coke was opened in his absence; such a freedom being understood, as I supposed, to arise

out of the connection between the two gentlemen. But for this part of the statement I cannot vouch. It was understood between Dr. Coke and me that the proposal should be communicated to the bishops of the Episcopal Church at the next convention, which was to be in September, 1792, in New York. This was accordingly done. After which I perceived no use of further communication on the subject; and I have not since seen Dr. Coke, nor heard from him, nor written to him.

It appears to me that the above comprehends either *explicitly*, or by *implication*, all the points to which your letter leads. It would have been more agreeable to me, if no occasion of this testimony had occurred; and it is now given merely to prevent the matter being understood otherwise than it really is.

The above is what I have written to Mr. McClaskey: and I remain, &c. &c.

Your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM WHITE.\*

From what is brought to light in the two preceding letters of Dr. Coke and Bishop White, it is evident that the doctor placed no reliance upon the validity of his title to the episcopacy. But upon the contrary, the admissions and acknowledgments which he makes all go directly to confirm and sustain the propositions which we have laid down, that John Wesley never constituted Dr. Coke a bishop; and that his pretensions to the episcopal office, and his founding them upon the authority of Mr. Wesley, *all amount to a mere nullity*. Of this Dr. Coke appears to have been fully sensible.

We now proceed to notice some of the contents of the doctor's letter, and in the first place invite attention to this particular sentence: "*He (Wesley) did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right to do so, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place.*" Dr. Coke had been brought up in the Church of England, and well understood the principles laid down in the *formularly* of that church. He also knew that, according to the same, a presbyter had no

\* See History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, by Rev. A. McCaine, p. 27.



"*authority*" to ordain or consecrate a presbyter to the episcopal office. He well knew that Bishop White had been ordained to the episcopacy by the proper authorities in England, as laid down in the formulary of the established church; that he subscribed to the doctrines and principles of that formulary: and therefore, when Dr. Coke said to Bishop White, "He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority," he as a matter of course well understood and believed that the bishop knew *the Rev. John Wesley, a presbyter of the Church of England, had no authority, whatever, to invest any man with "episcopal authority," and that all such investiture amounted to nothing more than a perfect nullity, and consequently could be regarded in no other light.*

Again, the propositions in the letter of Dr. Coke to Bishop White, in relation to a union of the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal Churches, appear to have been made by the doctor, without consulting his colleague, Mr. Asbury, or the traveling preachers, or the societies, or even Mr. Wesley.

It was a secret business. None of these were consulted. The project originated in his own mind; and we find him willing to transfer the Methodist Church, without consulting either the preachers or laity, to the Protestant Episcopal Church. No man will presume to assert that Dr. Coke had any authority whatever for making the overtures, which he did, to Bishop White. It was done without authority. It was done without the knowledge or expectation of any of the departments of the church, for they expected better things at his hands, and well he might say to the bishop, "I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business."

The next thing which we shall notice is that most remarkable and striking suggestion which Dr. Coke made in his private interview with Bishop White. The bishop, enumerating in his letter the outlines of the plan of Dr. Coke, says, "There was also suggested by him a propriety, *but not a condition made, of admitting* to the *episcopacy*, himself and the gentleman associated with him in the superintendence of the Methodist societies.

Here then we have another tacit acknowledgment on the part

of the doctor, that he did not regard himself as being invested with the functions of a bishop as understood among churchmen. In his letter to the bishop he had stated, "I don't think that the generality of them. (the ministers,) perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a re-ordination, if other hindrances were removed out of the way." These ministers had been ordained by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, and if they were "*bishops*," their right to ordain others to the ministry according to the practice of the English Church was unquestionable. If Dr. Coke was willing that these ministers should be re-ordained, it was a tacit admission that he and Mr. Asbury had no right to ordain, and the reader will bear in mind that the doctor was actually making an effort at negotiation for their re-ordination. Taking whatever view of this affair we may, we are forced to the conclusion that if Dr. Coke regarded himself as a bishop, his conduct is passing strange.

The suggestion of the doctor to the bishop, of the propriety of "admitting to the episcopacy" himself and the gentleman associated with him, seems to betray altogether an absence of that modesty which should mark the movements of the ministers of Christ, and which should certainly pertain to one who professed to belong to an order of ministers above that of presbyter. But the doctor wished to take rank with the episcopacy, and as practical authority suited his views and feelings best—and if we may infer from this action of the man, he did not consider himself in any valid or ecclesiastical sense of the term a bishop, as understood by those brought up in the English Church,—and "secrecy being important in the present state of the business," and no one being ready or prepared to represent his claims to the episcopacy, he took the initiative himself. And—shall it be written?—"BISHOP" Coke "suggested the propriety of his being admitted to the episcopacy."

Such claims, such pretensions, and such proceedings as we have detailed with regard to the introduction of episcopacy into the Methodist Church in America, can scarcely find a parallel in ecclesiastical history since the reformation. But these projects of Dr. Coke all failed. He had declared in his letter to Bishop White, that "*something must be done before the death of Mr.*

*Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success."* It had been agreed upon between him and Bishop White that his proposal of a union between the two churches should be laid before the Protestant Episcopal Convention which was to convene in New York, in September, 1792. The faithful and laborious Wesley closed his useful life on the 2d day of March, 1791. The project of Dr. Coke failed. If Mr. Wesley had lived, who was strongly attached to the established Church of England, we cannot tell what turn affairs might have taken, or what would have been the result of Dr. Coke's negotiations.

The motives that led Dr. Coke to take these steps are hard to fathom. He had been in the practice of using high-handed measures—such it is presumed as he thought compatible with the prerogatives of his episcopal authority, from the beginning of his connection with the Methodists in America; and although he was recognized by them as "one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church," yet at the conference at Baltimore, in 1787, they cut down his episcopal authority to such a degree, that his position as a "*bishop*" was rendered quite anomalous. The Rev. Jesse Lee says, "At the Baltimore Conference the preachers complained of Dr. Coke, because he had taken upon himself a right which they never gave him, of altering the time and place of holding our Conference, after it had been settled and fixed on at the previous conference. Another complaint was brought against him for writing improper letters to some of our preachers, such as were calculated to stir up strife and contentions among them."

At that time the doctor saw that the preachers were pretty generally united against him, he acknowledged his faults, begged pardon, and promised not to meddle with our affairs again when he was out of the United States. He then gave in writing a certificate to the same purpose, which is as follows:

#### CERTIFICATE OF DR. COKE TO THE CONFERENCE.

I do solemnly engage by this instrument, that I never will, by virtue of my office, as superintendent of the Methodist Church, during my absence from the United States of America, exercise any government in the said Methodist Church during my absence

from the United States. And I do also engage that I will exercise no privilege in the said church when present in the United States, except that of ordaining according to the regulations and law already existing, or hereafter to be made in the said church, and that of presiding when present in conference, and lastly, that of traveling at large.

Given under my hand the second day of May, in the year 1787.

THOMAS COKE.

Witnesses, JOHN TUNNIL,  
JOHN HAGERTY,  
NELSON REED.

The preachers then agreed to forgive what was past, provided this condition should be expressed in the minutes, which was done thus:

“Q. Who are the superintendents of our church for the United States.

“A. Thomas Coke (when present in the States) and Francis Asbury.”

The position in which the preceding certificate which Dr. Coke was required to give, and the condition thus expressed in the minutes, had placed him, was such that his claims to “episcopal authority” may be justly controverted on every side. If Dr. Coke was a “bishop” at all, in a proper ecclesiastical sense of that term, he was as much a “bishop” when in Europe as he was when in the United States. If he had been consecrated a “*bishop*” by the imposition of the hands of the Rev. John Wesley, as a matter of course, his “*episcopal authority*” over his bishopric was the same, unchanged and unchangeable, wherever he was, so long as he held that official station. The Rev. James O’Kelley, in giving an account of the transactions that took place at this conference, says, “the free people of America were exceedingly jealous of the growing body of Methodists, because of the European heads;” but we are not aware that such feelings could have influenced the conference in its action in the case of Dr. Coke. Mr. Asbury likewise was from the same land of “bishops and kings,” and yet the conference saw proper to “clip the wings” of the former as regards the exercise of his “episco-

pal authority," and at the same time left the other untrammelled in the exercise of the functions of his office. But such was the character of Methodist Episcopacy in 1787. Such was its character in 1791, when Dr. Coke attempted to negotiate with Bishop White to effect a union between the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal Churches. And yet Dr. Bascom, one of the champions of southern Methodism, in speaking of this same "episcopacy," uses the following remarkable language: "Not only had the General Conference done nothing toward the institution of episcopacy, but even the church had not. Its existence dates back before the birth of either. It was the first grand substantive arrangement around which all others subsequently clustered and assumed organic form."\*

Dr. Bascom has written this remarkable sentence while treating of the character of Methodist Episcopacy, "the *full validity* of our episcopacy, *as exclusively derived from Wesley*, must be admitted or *we have none*." We have already seen, from the testimony before us, Dr. Coke, whose name stands as the *first born* in that *episcopal* line, in his overtures to Bishop White, to all intents and purposes, renouncing "*the full validity*" of his claims to the episcopal office, in the admissions and overtures which he made to that gentleman. Again, we find Dr. Coke, eight years afterwards, petitioning the bishop of London to ordain a given number of preachers proposed by the British Conference.† How does this sound! What "full validity" do we find set forth in this act? "*Bishop*" Coke of the Methodist Church, petitions the Bishop of London, of the English Church, to ordain "a given number" of Methodist preachers! What is the plain inference to be drawn from this transaction? It is simply this, "*Bishop*" Coke tacitly admits that he had no authority to ordain. Why? Because he was not a "*bishop*."

Again we find Dr. Coke in 1813, petitioning some of the most eminent and influential British statesmen, who stood high with the government, for episcopal orders, and proposing a willingness "to renounce all connection with the Methodists if the prince regent would only make him bishop for India." If any thing

\* Review of the Manifesto of the Majority, p. 160.

† See Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, page 288.

should yet be wanting to satisfy the honest advocates of "Methodist Episcopacy" that Dr. Coke had no confidence in his own claims of episcopacy—that he was no bishop—and that some proceedings, altogether wrong, were had in the formation of the government of the M. E. Church, surely the following letter will. It is copied from "Wilberforce's Correspondence," vol. 2, page 114, and kindly furnished me by my much esteemed friend and brother, the Rev. Alexander McCaine. Here is the letter.

AT SAMUEL HAGUE'S, ESQ., LEEDS, APRIL 14, 1813.

DEAR AND HIGHLY RESPECTED SIR,—A subject which appears to me of great moment lies upon my mind, and yet it is a subject of such a delicate nature, that I cannot venture to open my mind upon it to any one of whose candor, piety, delicacy and honor I have not the highest opinion. Such a character I do indubitably esteem you, sir, and as such I will run the risk of opening my whole heart to you upon the point.

For at least twelve years, sir, the interests of our Indian empire have lain very near my heart. In several instances I have made attempts to open a way for missions to that country, and even for my going over there myself, but every thing proved abortive.

The prominent desire of my soul, even from my infancy (I may almost say), has been to be useful. Even when I was a deist for part of my time at Oxford, (what a miracle of grace!) usefulness was my most darling object. The Lord has been pleased to fix me for about thirty-seven years on a point of great usefulness. My influence in the large Wesleyan connexion, the introduction and superintendence of our missions in different parts of the globe, and the wide sphere opened to me for the preaching of the gospel to almost innumerable large and attentive congregations, have opened to me a very extensive field for usefulness. Could I but close my life in being the means of raising a spiritual church in India, it would satisfy the utmost ambition of my soul here below.

I am not so much wanted in our connexion at home as I once was. Our "committee of privileges," as we term it, can watch over the interests of the body, in respect to laws and government,

as well in my absence as if I was with them. Our missionary committee in London can do the same in respect to missions, and would only make them feel their duty more incumbent upon them. Auxiliary committees through the nation, (which we have now in contemplation,) will amply supply my place in respect to raising money. There is nothing to influence me much against going to India, but my extensive sphere for preaching the gospel. But this I do assure you, sir, sinks considerably in my calculation in comparison of the high honor, (if the Lord was to confer it upon me in his providence and grace,) of beginning or reviving a genuine work of religion in the immense regions of Asia.

Impressed with these views, I wrote a letter about a fortnight ago to the earl of Liverpool. I have either mislaid the copy of it or destroyed it at the time for fear of its falling into improper hands. After an introduction drawn up in the most delicate manner in my power, I took notice of the observations made by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons, concerning a religious establishment in India connected with the established church at home. I then simply opened my situation in the Wesleyan connection as I have stated to you, sir, above. I enlarged on the earnest desire I had of closing my life in India: observing that if his royal highness the prince regent and the government should think proper to appoint me their bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and most gratefully accept the offer. I am sorry I have lost the copy of this letter. In my letter to Lord Liverpool I observed that I should, in case of my appointment to the episcopacy of India, return most fully and faithfully into the bosom of the established church, and do every thing in my power to promote its interest, and would submit to all such restrictions in the fulfilment of my office as the government and bench of bishops at home should think necessary. That my prime motive was to be useful to the Europeans in India; and that my second (though not the least) was to introduce the Christian religion among the Hindoos by the preaching of the gospel and perhaps also by the establishment of schools.

I have not, sir, received an answer. Did I think that the  
was either withheld because Lord Liverpool considered

me as acting very improperly by making the request, I should take no farther step in the business. This may be the case, but his lordship's silence may have arisen from other motives: on the one hand because he did not choose to send me an absolute refusal, and on the other hand because he did not see proper, at least just now, to give me any encouragement. When I was in doubt this morning whether I ought to take the liberty of writing to you, my mind became determined on my being informed about three hours ago, that in a letter received from you by Mr. Hey, you observed that the generality of the House of Commons were set against granting any thing of an imperative kind to the Dissenters or Methodists in favor of sending missionaries to India. Probably I may err in respect to the exact words which you used.

I am not conscious, my dear, respected sir, that the least degree of ambition influences me in this business. I possess a fortune of £1,200 a year, which is sufficient to bear my traveling expenses, and to enable me to make many charitable donations. I have lost two dear wives, and am now a widower. Our leading friends through the connection receive me and treat me with the utmost respect and hospitality. I am quite surrounded with friends who greatly love me: but India still cleaves to my heart. I sincerely believe that my strong inclinations to spend the remainder of my life in India originated in the divine will, whilst I am called upon to use the secondary means to obtain the end.

I have formed an intimate acquaintance with Dr. Buchanan, and have written to him to inform him that I shall make him a visit in a few days, if it be convenient. From his house I intend, *Deo volante*, to return to Leeds for a day, and then set off next week for London. The latter end of last November I visited him before, at Moat Hall, his place of residence, and a most pleasant visit it was to me, and also to him I have reason to think. He has been, since I saw him, drinking of the same bitter cup of which I have been drinking, by the loss of a beloved wife.

I would just observe, sir, that a hot climate peculiarly agrees with me. I was never better in my life than when in the West Indies, during the four visits I made to that Archipelago, and should now prefer the torrid zone as a climate to any part of the world. I enjoy in this country, though sixty-five years of age,




such an uninterrupted flow of health and strength as astonishes all my acquaintances. They commonly observe that they have perceived no difference in me for these last twenty years.

I would observe, sir, as I did at the commencement, that I throw myself on your candor, piety and honor. If I do not succeed in my views of India, and it were known among the preachers that I had been taking the steps I am now taking, (though from a persuasion that I am in the divine will in so doing,) it might more or less affect my usefulness in the vineyard of my Lord, and that would very much afflict me. And yet, notwithstanding this, I cannot satisfy myself without some advances in the business.

I consider, sir, your brother-in-law, Mr. Stephen, to be a man of eminent worth. I have a very high esteem for him. I know that his yea is yea, and what he promises he certainly will perform. Without some promise of confidence he might (if he were unacquainted with the present business) mention it to Mr. —, with whom I know Mr. Stephen is acquainted.

I have reason to believe that Lord Eldon had (indeed I am sure of it) and probably now has an esteem for me. Lord Sidmouth I do think loves me. Lord Castlereagh once expressed to Mr. Alexander Knox, then his private secretary in Ireland, his very high regard for me; since that time I have had one interview with his lordship in London. I have been favored on various occasions with private and public interviews with Lord Bathurst. I shall be glad to have your advice whether I should write letters to those noblemen, particularly to the two first, on the present subject, or whether I had not better suspend every thing and have the pleasure of seeing you in London. I hope I shall have that honor. I shall be glad to receive three or four lines from you (don't write unless you think it may be of some immediate importance,) signifying that I may wait on you immediately on my arrival in London. If Mr. — were acquainted with the steps I am taking, he would I am nearly sure call immediately a meeting of our committee of privileges, and the consequences might be unfavorable to my influence and consequently to my usefulness among the Methodists. But my mind must be



ceased. I must venture this letter and leave the whole to God, and under him, sir, to you.

With very high respect, my dear sir, your very much obliged, very humble, and very faithful servant,

T. COKE.

This letter is the most remarkable document of the kind we have ever read. When we take into consideration the position of its author, his calling and character before the world, we are forced to the conclusion that it must stand alone, as having no parallel among all the petitions of office-hunters or the seekers of promotion and preferment from the civil authorities and "powers that be." The doctor's letter to Bishop White was bad enough, considering his profession and calling; but this one to Mr. Wilberforce is still worse. He sets out in his introduction by declaring the prominent and leading desire of his soul to be useful, and extolling the great sphere of usefulness in which he was then acting, and his influence in the large Wesleyan connexion. In the next place he brings to view the ease or propriety with which he could be released from his sphere of usefulness and influence in Europe, and then arrives at the gist of the subject, the main point in the grand question, "observing that if his royal highness the prince regent and the government should think proper to appoint me their bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and most gratefully accept of the offer."

Here we find this "bishop" of the Methodist Episcopal Church a second time presenting himself as an applicant for promotion to the episcopacy.

1. He suggested the propriety of his being admitted to the episcopacy in the United States, in 1791.

2. He petitions the British government to appoint him bishop to India, in 1813.

Yet the historical records of the M. E. Church teach us that Dr. Coke all this time was "one of the *bishops* of the Methodist Episcopal Church." But the conduct of Dr. Coke contradicts the assertion. If he was a "bishop" in his own estimation, he never would have petitioned for the appointment of "bishop" from any source whatever. But it appears from the actions of

the man that promotion suited his views of propriety concerning himself, and that *episcopacy* was a "gilded toy" which pleased his fancy; that no possible opportunity therefore was suffered to pass unimproved by him by which he might be raised to the office of bishop. The preceding letter breathes the spirit of vanity, egotism and ambition. He coveted the office of *bishop* and taking his own case into his own hands, laying aside all modesty, he becomes a petitioner directly to the British government for the much-loved and long-sought appointment. If he had ever received or had been invested with "episcopal authority" by Mr. Wesley, it is now forgotten or lost sight of, and the whole mind of the man is absorbed in the deep interest which he feels in being appointed bishop to India. He does not write as a bishop; he makes no pretensions to such a title or such an office, but he is *seeking* that office. His position is that of an applicant before those whom he acknowledges to be possessed of the power to bestow. And where is the man that can say, in view of all these things, that Dr. Coke had any legal claims to the office of "bishop?" If he was a bishop he would have known it. If he had known it he would not have become an applicant for the office. The conclusion then is, he was not a "bishop."

This letter of Dr. Coke to Mr. Wilberforce abounds with the most fawning flattery and sycophantic adulation that we have ever read. As an American, we declare it altogether unworthy of the profession of the man. But it was written in a land of "bishops and kings," by one whose education was deeply imbued with the spirit of such institutions, and where flattery often served, instead of merit, as a passport to promotion. Were it not that this letter comes to us through the highly respectable channel which it does, "Letters and Correspondence of Mr. Wilberforce," we should hardly be prepared to receive it. But the name and character of Wilberforce do away all suspicion that might arise as to the authority of the letter. One peculiar feature likewise is to be found in it which belonged to the letter written to Bishop White, viz: the injunction of secrecy.

Dr. Coke was a subject of the king of Great Britain, and his views and sentiments no doubt were far from being of the republican mould. In the part which he took in organizing the govern-

ment of the M. E. Church the principles of republicanism seem to have entered into none of his measures. There was an address drawn up and presented to General Washington, president of the United States, and signed by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, as bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which they lauded the constitution of the United States, and declared it to be the "admiration of the world." This address bears date "May 19th, 1789." For signing this address to the president of the United States Dr. Coke was charged before the British Conference; the sentiments which it set forth being thought by the British Conference to be unworthy of a subject of his majesty. He was censured for this act by his name being left off the minutes for one year.

From the facts and circumstances which we have narrated, it must be evident that the episcopacy which exists in the Methodist Episcopal Church is of a spurious character. We have not made it our business in these pages to go into a detailed account of the various definitions given of episcopacy by distinguished authors who have treated upon the subject, but will simply remark in this place, that among all the definitions of ecclesiastical writers of good authority, not one of them suits Methodist Episcopacy, or rather Methodist Episcopacy does not agree with any one of them.

At the organization of the M. E. Church in 1784, the title of superintendent was given to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury. In the general minutes, printed in 1787, the word superintendent was left out, and "bishop" inserted, and at the ensuing conference that body was asked if the word "*bishop*" might stand, seeing it was a scriptural name.

At the same time Mr. Wesley's name was left off the minutes.

Rev. James O'Kelley says, "this cruel act was thought by one to hasten the death of dear Wesley. Did not Thomas in behalf of Wesley, explode the conduct of Francis before a congregation in the city of Baltimore?"—Apology, p. 12.

In 1788, John Wesley wrote to Mr. Asbury, saying, "men may call me a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a *bishop*."

In the year 1791, we find Dr. Coke attempting a negotiation

with Bishop White of Philadelphia, for a union of the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal Churches, and suggesting "the propriety of *himself* and the *gentleman* associated with him" being admitted to the episcopacy.

In 1799, we find Dr. Coke petitioning the bishop of London to ordain "a given number" of Methodist preachers, and to all intents and purposes, by this act, declares himself no "*bishop*." Again, in 1813, we find Dr. Coke writing letters to Lord Liverpool and Mr. Wilberforce, seeking and soliciting the appointment of bishop to India in connection with the established church.

1. Therefore we arrive at the conclusion that episcopacy was foisted upon the Methodist Episcopal Church.

2. That it assumed its present form and character by degrees, as it did also its name.

3. That John Wesley was not the father of it.

4. That the laity of the church, not being consulted about it, as a matter of course had no hand in its introduction.

5. That Dr. Coke, the eldest son in this episcopal line, had no confidence in his right to exercise episcopal functions.

6. That Dr. Coke, whilst wearing the title of bishop, was extremely anxious to obtain the office and be invested with the functions of a bishop.

7. That the existence of "*episcopacy*" in the Methodist Episcopal Church has been the cause of all the difficulties and trials of any consequence through which she has passed.

8. That the high claims to authority and power set up for her "*episcopacy*" caused the Rev. William McKendree,\* Rev. James O'Kelley, together with many other worthy ministers, and a large body of the laity to secede from the M. E. Church.

9. That the same claims of power and prerogative maintained by the "*episcopacy*" led to the expulsion of the reformers from the communion of the M. E. Church, and gave rise to the establishment of the Methodist Protestant Church.

10. That it was this same indefinable episcopacy that brought about the division between the North and South, and severed the Methodist Episcopal Church into two parts in 1844.

\* Afterwards Bishop McKendree.

## CHAPTER III.

The right of the laity to participate in the councils of the church examined and vindicated from Scripture.—An examination of the steps taken in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the exclusion of the laity from participating in her councils.—The justice and propriety of that measure examined.—Remarks in vindication of the character of Rev. James O'Kelley.

HAVING in the preceding chapters brought to view the surreptitious manner in which episcopacy was introduced into the Methodist Episcopal Church, we proceed in the next place to notice another striking feature in the polity of that church, namely, the exclusion of the laity from the rule-making department. Every American citizen is possessed of civil rights. He has a voice in making the laws by which he is to be governed. By delegated authority he is represented both in the state and national legislatures. This is conceded by all to be politically right, because the principle is just and good. But should it stop here? We answer, No. Because man most unquestionably has his ecclesiastical as well as civil rights. The same principle is applicable to church as well as to state. If it is just in the latter, it is not unjust in the former. If the relationship which he sustains to the state justify his right to the exercise of the elective franchise, surely there can be nothing found in the nature of right, or of religion, or in the precepts of the gospel, to annul the justice or propriety of this principle as applicable to the relationship which the membership sustain to the church of God.

This doctrine is admitted and practised by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Congregationalists, and by all the Protestant denominations of Christians in the United States with the exception of the two divisions of the old hierarchy, viz: the "Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States," and the "Methodist Episcopal Church South." These two divisions of the original establishment formed by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, with their colleagues, still hold on to "the institutions of the

fathers" as "they received them from their hands," to the exclusion of the laity from all participation in the rule-making department of the church. The question naturally arises have the laity no right to a voice or representation in the department of the church in which rules are made for their government? We answer in the affirmative, and lay down the proposition that they have a right to exercise their suffrage in that department.

It is argued by ecclesiastical writers that no particular form of church government is laid down in the New Testament. This proposition we shall not attempt to controvert, but we do assume the position that enough is therein laid down and set forth to show most conclusively that *the laity were consulted and did participate in the councils that regulated the affairs of the primitive church*. To sustain this position we refer, in the first place, to the election of the successor of Judas. Acts of the Apostles, chap. i, v. 15, it is written, "And in those days Peter stood up in the *midst of the disciples*, and said, (the number of the names together were about a hundred and twenty,)" &c. Peter, in the address upon this occasion, did not address apostles alone; the sacred penman tells us he stood up in the midst of the disciples, and that their number was about one hundred and twenty. And in verse 22 he says, "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." In the following part of the chapter we are informed that they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias; and that after they had prayed they gave forth their lots. In this grave and deeply interesting transaction to the primitive church, we find that the eleven apostles were not acting alone or independent of the disciples (the laity), but the number of the names together were about a hundred and twenty; and in this election the laity most unquestionably participated with the apostles.

The next passage to which we refer, in order to support our position, is to be found, Acts, chapter 6th, verses 2 and 3, and relates to the selection of the seven deacons. It reads as follows: Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God

and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. In this instance the address is made to "*the multitude of disciples*." The business to be transacted was of great importance to the church. It was therefore, according to the judgment of the twelve apostles, necessary and proper for the "*multitude of disciples*" (the laity of the church) to have a hand in this matter; and as it pertained to the affairs of the church, it was laid before them.

In the 5th and 6th verses we read thus: And the saying pleased the *whole multitude*; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Simon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. This account, as stated by the sacred writer, clearly establishes the fact that in the first Christian church ever established, and which was located at Jerusalem, the laity participated in the affairs of its government, and acted an important and prominent part therein, and that too, by the counsel and approbation of the apostles. It was necessary to elect officers for the church. The apostles would not arrogate to themselves the right to do this, independent of their Christian brethren comprising the membership; this right belonged to the whole multitude. The apostles thus conceded it. Upon this principle the multitude acted; and the whole transaction goes to demonstrate the proposition that the laity in the primitive church were not only possessed of, but did actually exercise their suffrage and authority in the government of the same.

We beg leave to refer in the next place to Acts, chapter 15th, which affords an account of the first church council ever held. The result of that council is given in the following words, "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the *whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." (See verses 23 and 24). From the whole



tenor of the transaction, as recorded in this chapter, it is evident that the laity participated in the deliberations of this important church council. The terms used by the inspired writer clearly establish the fact. The words apostles and elders with the whole church are very expressive. Beyond the possibility of a doubt, the phrase embraces the laity. And the address of the letter sent by the messengers chosen by that council, shows most clearly to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind, that three distinct classes of persons, all belonging to the Christian church, constituted the writers of that epistle; that apostles, elders and brethren were all united to give authority and character to the same. Let the reader view this transaction of the church council at Jerusalem in every aspect of which it is susceptible, and the stubborn truth is forced upon his mind, that the laity of the church formed a part of that council; that they possessed an indefeasible right to participate in the same, and that right is endorsed by apostles and elders all co-operating together.

Although no particular form of church government is laid down in the New Testament, yet there is enough set forth and contained therein to show to the satisfaction of the honest inquirer after truth, that *the laity have an unquestionable right to a participation in the councils that relate to the government of the church.* And by the testimony which we have drawn from holy writ, and the arguments adduced therefrom, we hope that we have fully and fairly sustained the position laid down in the second page of this chapter.

The truth being clearly established that the laity were possessed of ecclesiastical rights and privileges, and participated in the affairs that related to the government of the primitive church, the injustice and impropriety of the polity adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church upon her organization, in excluding the laity from participating or exercising any voice or authority in her rule-making department or councils, becomes more apparent and manifestly more absurd.

There is not the least evidence extant that the moving spirits in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church entertained the most remote idea of admitting the laity to exercise any influence or participate in any way in the rule-making department.

But on the contrary it is evident that the laity were to be left out or excluded, from the simple fact that they were not invited to the conference of 1784 when the church was organized. Rev. Jesse Lee, who was a firm advocate of the M. E. Church hierarchy, and whose account will not be called in question, writes thus "about the steps taken in that organization: "As soon as Dr. Coke landed in America he laid his plan to meet Mr. Asbury as soon as possible, and traveling from New York to Philadelphia and then down into Delaware State, he met with Mr. Asbury at Barrett's chapel, on the 14th of the same month, (November, 1784.) They then consulted together about the plan which Mr. Wesley had adopted and recommended to us. After the business was maturely weighed and sufficient time was taken to consult some more of the preachers who were present on that day, it was judged advisable to call together all the traveling preachers in a general conference to be held in Baltimore at Christmas. Mr. Freeborn Garrison undertook to travel to the south, in order to give notice to all the traveling preachers of this intended meeting. But being fond of preaching by the way, and thinking he could do the business by writing, he did not give timely notice to the preachers who were in the extremity of the work, and of course several of them were not at that conference." (History of the Methodists, p. 93.)

From this account it is evident that Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and the few preachers whom they "consulted," had no disposition or intention whatever, to permit the laity to have any weight or take any part in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Our reasons for arriving at this conclusion are these:

1. Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury determined upon calling together none but the preachers upon that occasion.
2. Mr. Garrison, who undertook to travel to the south, went to give notice to the traveling preachers, and not to the laity.
3. The shortness of the notice given, which was just six weeks from the day that Dr. Coke met Mr. Asbury, plainly intimates that the laity were not to be consulted.
4. Not one of the laity took a seat in the General Conference of 1784. But that conference was composed of Dr. Coke, Mr.

Asbury, and the traveling preachers. Such, then, was the complexion of that conference in which the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church received its mould and form. The laity had no delegated representative authority in that body; nor has a layman ever since been permitted to hold a seat either in a General or an Annual Conference of that church.

The Annual Conferences are composed of the bishops and traveling preachers: no layman is permitted to exercise the right of taking a seat with them. The General Conference is composed of the bishops and delegates of the traveling preachers, elected by the respective Annual Conferences. These delegates, being elected by the itinerant preachers, receive all their delegated authority from that source, and consequently are to be viewed as the representatives of the traveling preachers alone, or of the Annual Conferences from which they have been elected. Neither the voice nor the vote of a layman is heard or received in this body. And, strange to tell, in this the highest council of the church the rules for the government of the laity are made. Nor does their exclusion from the right of suffrage stop here. In the election of church officers they are without a voice. The class-leaders are appointed and the stewards nominated by the "preacher in charge," and the former may be removed by him at his pleasure. The trustees who are to hold the church property are appointed by him, and come into office through his choice, and consequently in the Quarterly Meeting Conference (in which, by virtue of his authority to appoint church officers,) he may obtain a most preponderating influence; that body being composed of the preacher in charge, his assistant, (if he have one,) all the local preachers, exhorters, stewards and class-leaders upon the circuit. Taking this glance at the principles of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we ask in all candor, can one solitary feature or principle of republicanism be found in it? We think the answer must be no. None can be found. Why? Because the laity are altogether excluded from the exercise of the right of suffrage. And strange as it may appear, we have heard it argued, both by the ministry and the laity of this church, that her system of church government is *purely republican*. One argument that we have heard advanced to support the

preceding proposition, was nearly in these words, "that the membership had a right to petition both the Annual and General Conferences; that they did often petition those bodies, that their petitions were received, read, and respectfully considered; consequently they were represented, and had an influence in those bodies." How flimsy the argument! How miserable the subterfuge! Is it not a well known fact that foreigners sometimes petition our national and state legislatures, and that their petitions are respectfully treated? and who, we ask, with any pretensions to intelligence or even to sanctity, would presume to assert that they are represented in such legislatures, when the truth is they have neither part nor lot in them? Again, some of the votaries of the Methodist Episcopal hierarchy have endeavored to explain the "*republicanism*" of that church by a process of reasoning quite different. They lay down the proposition that the laity make, constitute, and appoint the preachers, who make the rules for their government. The *wonderful* argument to support this proposition runs thus: "the laity recommend all persons who are candidates for preacher's license to the Quarterly Conference; that without such recommendation they could not obtain license or orders;—that all the traveling ministers who have seats in an Annual Conference, or are elected to seats in the General Conference, once obtained this recommendation from the class or society of which he was a member." Such an argument should excite our pity; and no doubt the only reason why such a one was ever used was this, there was none better to give, and a bad argument was better than none.

But light as it is, suppose we weigh it in the scales of truth. When a society recommends a man to the proper authority to obtain license to preach, what is the extent or latitude of ~~that~~ recommendation? Is it to become a traveling preacher? Answer, no; because the authority to which they recommend him, cannot constitute him such. Is it to have him ordained to the ministry? Answer, no; because the authority in question are also deficient in that respect. Is it to have him constituted a member of an Annual Conference? Answer, no; because the authority to which the society recommend him cannot make him one. Does the society then recommend him as a proper person to

make laws or rules for the church? Answer, no; because they recommend him only to the Quarterly Conference as a suitable person to be licensed to preach. The recommendation goes no further; it looks no further.

1. The person so recommended, when he shall have been examined by the proper authorities, may be found deficient in the requisite qualifications, and may fail entirely in obtaining license.

2. The applicant may have no idea of acting in any other sphere than that of a local preacher, consequently he can never take any part in making rules for the church.

3. The applicant so recommended by his society may obtain license to preach, be recommended by the proper authority, the Quarterly Conference, as a suitable person to enter the traveling connexion, and yet never obtain full standing in the Annual Conference, and consequently never become a suitable person to exercise any weight or influence in the rule-making department of the church.

Thus it will be perceived that the argument in question amounts to nothing. Indeed all those who set up such arguments seem to forget the fact that when some thousands of the members of the M. E. Church petitioned the General Conference of 1824, asking that body, in most respectful terms, to adopt such measures as would admit the laity to be represented in the law-making department of the church; claiming it as a right and a privilege to which they were in justice entitled; they were answered in a pastoral address adopted by the conference and signed by the bishops, with a "*pardon us, dear brethren, if we know no such rights, if we comprehend no such privileges.*"

Rev. Jesse Lee, in speaking of the conference that convened at Baltimore on the 27th of December, 1784, says, "At this conference we formed ourselves into a regular church, by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church."\* We have before stated that the laity were not represented in this conference, nor were they notified, so far as we have been able to learn, that such a measure as the organization of the church was intended to be adopted at that time. But the deed was done, and done, too,

\* See Lee's History of the Methodists, p. 94.

without the sanction or consent of the laity being obtained. The question now is, was it right? We answer, no. It was unjust, it was unrighteous. They professed to be acting under the sanction of Mr. Wesley's name. In the first quotation which we have introduced in this chapter from "Lee's History of the Methodists," we are informed that when Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury first met together in America "they consulted together about the plan which Mr. Wesley had adopted and recommended to us." In all our researches and inquiries in the history of Methodism we have been unable to find any thing which can be taken for the plan alluded to, unless it be the letter of Mr. Wesley, dated September 10, 1784, and addressed "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America." No other document, showing the semblance of "a plan," has ever been produced in this country, upon the authority of his name with the exception of this one. But what is the plan that this document recommends? Or what is the advice therein given? Let Mr. Wesley answer for himself in his own words. Here it is. "*They (the American Methodists) are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.*" This advice is good. It is worthy of the great and good Wesley. But it was not regarded by the conference of 1784. If it had been, the rights of the laity would neither have been disregarded nor trampled under foot. If, according to Mr. Wesley's advice, the usages of the "primitive church" had been followed, the laity would have been called upon, and permitted to exercise their rights, and act their part in the governmental affairs of the church.

As an ecclesiastical historian, Mosheim ranks among the most pre-eminent. This writer informs us that the people, the laity, did participate in the councils, and exercise a due weight and influence in the affairs and government of the primitive church. He says, "It was, therefore, the assembly of the people which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them by a free and authoritative consent, when recommended by others. The same people rejected or confirmed, by their suffrage, the laws that were proposed by their rulers to the assembly; excommunicated profli-

gate and unworthy members of the church ; restored the penitents to their forfeited privileges ; passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and dissension that arose in their community ; examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons ; and, in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power." This authority and these rights, exercised by the "*people*" of the primitive church, the Baltimore Conference of 1784 withheld from the "*people*" of the M. E. Church. Mr. Wesley held the reins of power in his own hands among the Methodists in the united kingdom of Great Britain ; he was acknowledged by these as their spiritual father. He saw proper to exclude republicanism from his polity in the government of his societies in that part of the world. Indeed it is very probable that he may have been quite anti-republican in his feelings in a general point of view, as it is a well known fact that he was warmly opposed to the independence of the United States. We copy the following characteristic letter written by him, and which was published in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine (London) for April, 1830. It is addressed to Mr. John Mason.

NEAR LONDON, JANUARY 13, 1790.

My Dear Brother,—As long as I live the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not and never had any such custom. *We are no republicans, and never intend to be.* It would be better for those that are so minded to go quietly away. I have been uniform both in doctrine and discipline for above these fifty years ; and it is a little too late for me to turn into a new path, now I am old and gray-headed. Neither good old brother Purna (God bless him) expects it from me, nor brother Wood, nor brother Flammank. If you and I shall be called hence this year, we may bless God that we have not lived in vain. Come ; let us have a few more strokes at Satan's kingdom, and then we shall depart in peace !

From the tenor of this letter we are left without a doubt concerning the anti-republicanism of Mr. Wesley's policy with respect to the government of his Societies in Great Britain. It was

in that school that the two Britons, Coke and Asbury, formed their opinions of church policy for the Methodists. They were well acquainted with the *modus operandi* by which Mr. Wesley held the reins of power over his societies,—and if they were the lovers of power and authority which some of their friends have represented them to be, we need be at no loss to account for the manner in which they, as *the moving spirits and active managers* in the conference of 1784, ventured to depart from the counsel and advice of Mr. Wesley, with regard to the proper course to be pursued by the American Methodists; and this departure most unjustly excluded the laity from all participation in the councils of the church, by adopting something similar to the pattern which they had seen in England.

Thus have we presented to view the manner in which the laity in the Methodist Episcopal Church have been proscribed from a participation in the councils which form the rules for the government of her members; and the anomalous spectacle is presented before us of the itinerant ministry arrogating to themselves the authority and right to legislate for the whole church, to enact the rules for the government of all its members, and also to execute those rules. With regard to the character of such a government as the one which we have described, we beg leave in this place to quote the opinion of Dr. Bascom, which is certainly entitled to much weight. The doctor says, “A prescriptive legislative body, making laws without the knowledge or consent of the people to be governed by them, is a **DESPOTISM**. Legislatures without constituents, or peers and fellows deputing them as their representatives and actors,—thus constituting themselves a legislature beyond the control of the people,—is an exhibition of **TYRANNY** in one of its most dangerous forms.” With the learned author just quoted we fully concur in opinion. The argument has been advanced by the advocates of the Methodist Episcopal Church polity, that “the system of government adopted by the ecclesiastical authorities of said church was prepared for the acceptance of the membership,—that every one who united with the Methodist Episcopal Church accepted and adopted that system,—and consequently agreed to submit and conform to the same.” Now it must be admitted that such would certainly be a very



tame submission, when we take into view the powers of the General Conference, and the alarming extent to which those powers are sometimes exercised. If the General Conference were infallible, such submission would not involve so much impropriety, nor prove such a dangerous surrender of the exercise of just and proper rights. That the action of the General Conference does often interfere with the feelings and ecclesiastical situation of those who have tamely submitted to the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, many will testify. The General Conference of 1844 passed a resolution, or adopted a plan to divide the church into two separate divisions, North and South. The laity were not consulted at all upon the subject. The ministry, we presume, plead no authority of constitution or Discipline for so doing; but embarked in this work because they believed their powers to be competent to the task under the circumstances. A plan of separation was agreed upon by the itinerant ministry; the laity having no hand in it. That act has proved sorely embarrassing to thousands of the laity of the church, and has led to consequences and events long to be deplored in some of the churches in Virginia; particularly in the town of Alexandria at this time. What divisions in feeling! what enmities the plan of separation has produced! And that plan was devised and acted upon by the itinerant ministry without consulting the laity! But the question may be asked, can there be any impropriety on the part of a Christian by connecting himself with an ecclesiastical establishment in which the right of the elective franchise is withheld from him? We beg leave to call up Dr. Bascom to answer this question. Hear him:

“Whenever a Christian people place themselves under a ministry who claim the right of thinking and deciding for them, in matters of faith and morality, they are guilty of *impiety*, however unintentional, to the great Head of the church, inasmuch as it is required of every Christian to reflect and determine for himself in all such cases, and the duty cannot be performed by another.”

This sentiment of the doctor's is weighty. Let the reader digest it well. Comment is unnecessary. It is comprehensive and expressive. There are thousands of the laity, no doubt,

who suppose that all church authority of right belongs to the clergy; and many may even glory in the "supposed fact that they have no ecclesiastical right;" and that all church power is safely lodged in the hands of the itinerant ministry. If the piety of such men is not deeper than their intelligence, they should be objects of our pity. The sentiment quoted above bears very hard upon all such. But the question may be asked, may it not tend to promote the unity and prosperity of a church, if the laity waive or disdain the exercise of ecclesiastical rights, and suffer the exercise of church power or authority to be vested entirely in the ministry? We again call Dr. Bascom to the stand. Hear him:

"Whenever the members of a church resign the right of suffrage, and of discussing freely and fearlessly the conduct of their rulers, whether it be done by direct concession, or indirectly by attaching themselves to and continuing within the pale of a church where such a system of polity obtains, they renounce to a fearful extent one of the first principles of the PROTESTANT religion, and bring dishonor upon its name."

So wrote Dr. Bascom, and who will dare to controvert the doctrine laid down in the sentiment? It is worthy of all consideration, and merits the attention of every inquirer after truth. In the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church we find that she has repeatedly been agitated, and in every instance the nature of her government has been the exciting cause; that the claims to high legislative authority set up by the ministry have been one of the most fruitful sources of her troubles. Her membership, generally, are satisfied with her government, or profess so to be, (although conscious that they are permitted to exercise no weight or voice in it,) until by some unexpected change in affairs they are made to feel the weight of arbitrary power. The scales thus falling from their eyes, they begin to talk about just rights, equal rights, "mutual rights," &c. Such is the peculiar attachment of some to what they have heard called the "most excellent book of Discipline" of the M. E. Church, that they will not suffer themselves to peruse a paper or document that calls in question the justice of the principles couched in that book. The following anecdote may not be inappropriate. A gentleman presented to his neighbor a little pamphlet entitled, "Questions and Answers

on Church Government," with a request that he should read it, as it contained some things that had interested him. This neighbor was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and quite zealous for her Discipline. Upon taking up the little pamphlet in question, and reading one or two pages, he threw it down, exclaiming, "*I shall not read it; I see at once that the object is to show the superiority of the M. P. Church government over that of the M. E. Church; and that is enough for me to know.*" Such are the men we suppose to whom Dr. Bascom alludes when he says, "They renounce to a fearful extent one of the first principles of the Protestant religion, and bring dishonor upon its name."

#### REV. JAMES O'KELLEY.

We have had occasion to introduce the name of this distinguished minister of the gospel into the body of this work; and as much has been said and written from certain quarters, tending to disparage the name and character of that good and worthy man, we deem it but justice to his memory to make a few statements in this place in regard to him. At the conference in Baltimore, in 1792, Mr. O'Kelley brought in a resolution which read in these words: "After the bishop appoints the preachers at conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the conference and state his objections; and if the conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit." The debates on this resolution sorely agitated the conference. It had many talented advocates as well as opponents. The measure failed when it was put to vote. The one-man-power party triumphed; and Rev. James O'Kelley, Rev. Wm. McKendree, and several other ministers withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, as they were unwilling longer to endure a government so arbitrary.

Rev. Jesse Lee tells us in his history that one of the preachers told him "that it was his intention to have O'Kelley tried at that conference for the false doctrines which he had been preaching; and he believed that his leaving the conference was more out of fear of being brought to trial than on account of the appeal."

We understand from Mr. Lee that the "false doctrines" alluded to was Unitarianism. Dr. Bangs, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," presents Mr. O'Kelley in a position scarcely more enviable. These charges and allegations have been repeated and reiterated so long and so often that many at the present time take it for granted that they are true. I shall here record the testimony of one of his Christian friends in vindication of his character, one who knew him well, and I might almost say, one who knew him best. This writer says of Mr. O'Kelley:

"Many slanders have been leveled at this eminently great and pious minister of Jesus Christ by the sycophants of episcopacy. According to them his soul was ambitious, and his doctrines heterodox; he withdrew because he was not made a bishop. This senseless slander, which no man of common understanding can believe, has been circulated with as much seriousness by some of the 'divinely authorized' as if they really believed the truth of their assertion. He was charged with being a Unitarian, and of denying the divine character of our common Saviour. I was intimately acquainted with him for thirty-five years, in which time I have been with him at different times for months together. I knew as much of his sentiments as any human being upon earth, and I declare before God *that he always contended for the divinity of Christ, and the fullness and extent of his atonement, with a strength of thought and energy of expression that I have never heard equaled by any other man.* This was the subject of the last sermon I ever heard him deliver, when bending under the weight of almost ninety years. His superior as a Christian and his equal as a preacher I have never yet seen. He died in the triumphs of faith, and is now seated in his heavenly Saviour's kingdom. He was the friend and instructor of my youth, and his memory shall be dear to me until my heart is cold in death.

"Here I wish to make a few remarks respecting the Christian Church. About the year 1794 Mr. O'Kelley and others, who had withdrawn from the Episcopal Methodists at the General Conference of 1792, with several societies and local preachers, formed themselves into an independent church, and called it the 'Republican Methodist Church.' This name it bore for several years, until a majority became convinced that the disciples of

Christ should be called by his name, believing this was the worthy name by which the primitive saints were called, and that they were so called first at Antioch by divine appointment, for so the original term seems to imply. This they believe is the *new name* by which the Lord promised his followers should be called. This name, therefore, was adopted. There were, indeed, a few who opposed its adoption, viz: Rev. John Robertson, Thomas Hardy and Edward Almond, and a few private members, who still retained the former name. This little church is now extinct. The church in connection with Mr. O'Kelley always did and still does believe, and her ministers preach, the doctrine of a trinity, the divinity of the Son of God, and his atonement for lost sinners, as fully and closely as any people upon earth. Some years after the organization of this church a sect sprang up in New England, who are strictly Unitarians, also calling themselves the 'Christian Church.' They published a paper entitled 'The Herald of Gospel Liberty,' edited by Elias Smith, in which they deny the divinity of Christ, and ridicule the doctrine of atonement. They refuse baptism to infants, and administer it by immersion to adults alone.

"Seventeen or eighteen years past, a missionary by the name of Plummer was sent from this body, who attended a general meeting of the Christian Church. Mr. O'Kelley asked him, 'If Jesus Christ were now upon earth, and you knew it were he, would you worship him?' He answered, 'No, no sooner than I would you, for I do not believe he was any more divine.' Mr. O'Kelley replied, 'Then I have no fellowship for you?' He was a man of insinuating address. He drew off Mr. William Guiry, a man of ingenuity and eloquence; and they proselyted some of the most numerous and respectable societies in Virginia and every traveling preacher at that time in connection with Mr. O'Kelley, with some local preachers and a few members, and two or three preachers in this State. There is no intercourse between these churches. Those who remained firm to their first doctrines refused all fellowship with this heterodox party, and viewed them as refined infidels infinitely more dangerous than the disciples of Voltaire, Rousseau, or Paine. But being called by the same general name, the same heterodoxy is by many indiscrimi-

nately ascribed to all, for the want of information, and by numbers more from design, especially some of the 'divinely authorized,' many of whom know better, but, to injure a church they do not love, they zealously propagate the cruel slander. The charge of Arianism, Socinianism, &c., so liberally bestowed upon the orthodox Christian Church,\* has more than all other things retarded its prosperity and advancement; but, in spite of all opposition, it is gradually increasing. It has a number of respectable, pious and useful preachers, and some of them of superior talents, and several thousand members. There have been some considerable revivals in it in the course of a few years, with the addition of some hundreds of members. The members and preachers of this church are to a man (I believe) genuine republicans, and ardently wish the most complete success to the reformers in their glorious struggle.

"This brief statement I have shown to an old preacher of high standing and several members of the Christian Church, who are of opinion that its publicity may be attended with good consequences. To Mr. O'Kelly and his dissenting brethren, as well as us reformers, has been meted out a full share of episcopal ire. We may well doubt the goodness of a cause which requires such weapons to defend it. Despotism and tyranny need persecution and slander to support them. Truth and justice can stand by themselves. If they had truth on their side, surely it could be fairly defended; and although the bombast of an Armistead, and the sophistical reasoning of one of the laity, a Bond and an Emory have failed, there must be at least one champion in the invincible phalanx of the itinerants who, Sampson-like, could step forward and tear up the sophisms of the reformers by the roots and expose their nefarious designs to the contempt and abhorrence of the world.† The advocates for reform deserve well of their brethren of every sect, for indeed religious liberty is a common cause; and notwithstanding all that their enemies can say against them, the names of an O'Kelley, a Jennings, a Shinn,

\* The church in which Mr. O'Kelley lived in full fellowship.

† This article was written in the time in which the reform question was agitated.

a McCaine, a Snethen, and a Dorney, with many others of the martyrs of the present times, shall live embalmed in the grateful recollection of unborn thousands, and be handed down with honor to the latest generation, while the names of the present episcopal despots shall perish from the earth or only be remembered with disgust as the religious oppressors of the present day.

“ A CITIZEN OF CASWELL COUNTY, N. C.”

We regard the preceding paper as a triumphant defence of that pious and worthy minister, Mr. O'Kelley. Let those who have regarded him as guilty of the heresy of Unitarianism weigh it well. But the question may be asked, has not the denomination with which he lived in fellowship, embraced the doctrine of the Unitarians? There is a union or fraternal relation of some kind existing between them and the Unitarians of the north, which union was consummated about the year 1839. In the south there are three conferences, called “ the North Carolina and Virginia Christian Conference,” “ the North Carolina Christian Conference,” and “ the Eastern Virginia Christian Conference.” The last named conference is composed principally of the party drawn away from Mr. O'Kelley by Mr. Plummer. The three conferences meet together in what they call the “ Southern Christian Association.” They have established a paper entitled the “ Christian Sun,” which is devoted to the interests of the association, and in which the doctrine of Unitarianism is boldly advocated.

The last session of this association adopted the following resolution, “ Resolved, that we advise our brethren to procure for their use the hymn book published by the Christian General Book Association at Albany, N. Y.” Although we believe, from our acquaintance with these people, that some *few* of the ministers are sound in the doctrines once preached by Mr. O'Kelley, yet we think this alliance with the Unitarians is altogether improper and highly reprehensible, as it appears that they unite upon a name, keeping doctrines and faith out of the question. Under all these circumstances, we fear that the flourishing Christian Churches planted by the venerable O'Kelley will ere long become the school of Unitarianism.

Mr. O'Kelley was like Mr. Whitfield, a great and successful minister of the gospel, but deficient in the economy of church

government. Herein he failed. If the more cautious and politic Wesley had pursued the course adopted by the two former and failed to bind his societies together by written rules, and unite them thereby upon well defined principles, they might at this day have been as few in numbers as those of Mr. Whitfield. Mr. O'Kelley and his preachers, with the societies, adopted the New Testament both as a confession of faith and a discipline for the government of the church. But men with regard to the doctrines of the New Testament differ widely—even so with regard to the maxims of church polity contained therein. And it is the opinion of those most experienced in ecclesiastical affairs that a condensed embodiment of the fundamental doctrines of religion and a summary of well defined rules for government, secure the most unity and harmony in the church, and lead to the greatest prosperity, as they admit of less latitude of construction than many take in the New Testament. Mr. O'Kelley has gone the way of all the earth, but he has left a name and a character that live embalmed in the fond recollection of numerous friends and admirers. He closed his useful life in peace, and we trust has entered into that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

THE END.





